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A SAFEGUARD OF PEACE

Soviet Armed Forces:
History, Foundations, Mission



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FOREWORD

This book is about the armed forces of the world's first socialist state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Ever since people have united into states they maintained armed forces—organized bodies of men armed and trained for warfare.

History knows wars waged by ancient conquerors and by the Crusaders of the Middle Ages. Then there were colonial wars launched to conquer the lands the Europeans had discovered and to subjugate peoples; imperialist wars staged to redivide colonies and suppress national liberation movements. All these dramatic events in history involved the armed forces. In all exploiter societies, armies have been and remain instruments of violence, conquest of foreign territories, and the subjugation of nations. With the help of armies the ruling exploiter classes have held in submission the people of their countries, defended the status quo of the dominant classes against the revolutionary masses, and protected their countries against other aggressors and conquerors.

Vladimir Lenin gave an explicit definition of the bourgeois armed forces: "Everywhere the standing army has become the weapon of reaction, the servant of capital in its struggle against labour, the executioner of the people's liberty."¹

With the emergence of the world's first socialist state there appeared a new army, the Soviet Army, whose aims and purposes were different from its counterparts in the capitalist world.

The Soviet Army is a truly people's military organiza-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Armed Forces and the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 56.

tion both in its composition and social purpose. Without threatening anyone, it exists for the defense of the freedom and independence of the Soviet people and their achievements in socialist development. At the same time the Soviet government and its armed forces have never let down their allies and friends fighting for freedom and independence.

The Armed Forces of the USSR are 70 years old. Throughout these years they have stood the harshest trials. During the Civil War of 1918-1920 the Soviet Armed Forces routed the numerous White Guard troops and foreign interventionists armed with first-rate military technology, and defended the gains of the October Socialist Revolution. The Soviet Army and Navy achieved an outstanding victory in their bitter battles with Nazi Germany during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Their heroic struggle contributed fundamentally to the defeat of the German and Japanese aggressors, upheld the freedom and independence of the Soviet country, and saved other nations from fascist enslavement.

The history of the Soviet Union has convincingly shown that a state of the working people can preserve its independence and successfully build a new life only when the masses of people learn to defend the gains of the Revolution from the attacks of the class enemy and create their armed forces.

For over 40 years now after the end of the Second World War, the Soviet people have lived under a peaceful sky, making great strides in social development. Considerable achievements in building a new life have been registered in the other countries of the socialist community. The international working class movement, the national liberation movements and the forces of social progress have made great headway. More and more nations strive to establish a system of social relations which has prevailed in the socialist countries. At the same time the capitalist world's range of dominance is shrinking inexorably.

Imperialism, however, shows no desire to accept the political realities of the modern world. The forces of reaction, with US imperialism in the lead, in every way possible seek to arrest the positive changes in the world. For the sake of their self-serving policies, they are prepared to sacrifice

the interests and security of other countries and peoples. Especially dangerous in this respect is the current policy of the USA of forcing its will on other nations.

The decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the CPSU Program (new edition) present a profound and all-round assessment of the modern international situation, the causes of its aggravation, and the real threat aggressive forces of imperialism pose to peace. The Communist Party has unequivocally reaffirmed its principled Leninist foreign policy of peace, and has proposed a concrete program to curb the arms race, reduce and completely eliminate all weapons of mass annihilation by the end of this century, and preserve and consolidate peace and the security of nations. The Soviet government has repeatedly demonstrated its aspiration for universal peace and its concern for the destiny of mankind. The Soviet Union stands for peaceful, civilized international relations based on genuine respect for the standards of international law.

Meanwhile, the strategy and militarist programmes of the West remain pivoted on the striving for social revenge. The world situation remains tense and the threat of war persists.

Under these conditions the Soviet Union, without slackening its struggle for peace, has been forced to adopt necessary measures to ensure its security and the security of its allies, and maintain a strategic parity which would rule out military superiority of the aggressive forces. As an important historical gain of the fraternal socialist countries, this balance of forces reliably checks the aggressive aspirations of imperialism.

The Soviet Army plays a most important role in maintaining the security of the Soviet Union and its allies. It safeguards the historic gains of our country and the inviolability of its borders and ensures favorable external conditions for the nation to work in peace to implement the program of perfecting socialist society and raising the standards of living of the Soviet people.

Together with the armies of other socialist countries, the Soviet Army and Navy perform their internationalist duty, providing for a collective defense of socialism and standing on guard of the security and independence of the countries of the socialist community. They are a powerful factor in

detering imperialist aggressors, and a stronghold of the security of nations following the path of social progress.

This book traces the emergence and development of the Soviet Armed Forces and tells about the heroic battles they waged defending the nation. The reader will get an insight into the structure of the Soviet Armed Forces today, the arms and branches of the service they consist of and the traditions they have. The book also tells about the life and combat training of Soviet servicemen, their education, and how they discharge their duties.

CHAPTER 1

DEFENDING THE GAINS OF THE OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

*Inception of the New World * Imperialists Threaten with Intervention * Organization of the Red Army * Lenin and the Party at the Head of the Fighting Masses * Defeat of the Combined Forces of the Internal and External Counter-revolution * Sources of the Red Army's Victory in the Civil War*

In 1917, Russia became a focal point of revolutionary events which had a tremendous influence on the whole course of world history. In late February a bourgeois-democratic revolution took place in the country. The czarist monarchy was deposed, and a bourgeois Provisional Government assumed power. The people who had carried out the revolution hoped that it would bring human conditions in labor and life for the workers, land for the peasants, and freedom for the oppressed national minorities. Exhausted by the ordeals of the world war, the people yearned for peace. But the Provisional Government did not live up to these expectations. The war raged on. People kept dying at the battle front. Hunger and economic ruin were rampant in the country. Naturally, the masses of workers, land-hungry peasants and soldiers could not accept such a situation. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party they waged a struggle for peace, bread, land, and equality of the nations and ethnic groups inhabiting Russia.

In October 1917 the struggle developed into an armed uprising. A socialist revolution took place in Russia, marking the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind. The workers, peasants, revolutionary soldiers and sailors, led by the Bolshevik Party, overthrew the Provisional Government. All power in the land passed into the hands of the working people represented by the Soviets (Councils)

of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The All-Russia Congress of Soviets meeting in Petrograd (now Lenin-grad) proclaimed the establishment of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and formed the Soviet government—the Council of People's Commissars. Vladimir Lenin became its Chairman. The Congress also elected an All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the Soviets as the country's supreme body of state power functioning between the congresses.

Among the first legislative acts of the Soviet government was the Decree on Peace, the Decree on Land and the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia. Soviet power appeared before the whole world as a truly democratic system. For the first time in history it proclaimed: power belongs to the working people; the land, its wealth, plants and factories, cultural treasures belong to the state of workers and peasants.

The Soviet state proposed to all the powers and nations engaged in the First World War to conclude a just and democratic peace without annexations or indemnities.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia was the world's first law enacting genuine freedom and equality for all the nations and ethnic groups inhabiting the country. It proclaimed the principles of equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia and their right to self-determination.

While preparing the revolution, the Bolshevik Party led by Lenin carried out tremendous work in organizing the broadest sections of the working class, peasants, soldiers and sailors. They readily responded to the Party's call to overthrow the exploiters. That explains why the transition of power to the Soviets was the most peaceful and bloodless ever recorded in the history of revolutionary change of power.

But the Bolsheviks realized that the revolution's enemies, the capitalists and landowners in Russia and abroad, would not accept the victory of Soviet power.

Lest the imperialists take the victorious revolution un-awares, the workers and peasants, as Lenin insisted, had to arm themselves, learn the art of warfare, and organize their own armed forces. At the height of the First World War, Lenin wrote that the women of the oppressed class must say to their sons: "You will soon be grown up. You will be given

a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war.'"¹

Emergence of a New Army

The Fire of the Revolution

The Bolshevik Party was carrying on organizational work and political education in the czarist land forces and navy well before the October Socialist Revolution, especially during the First World War. It set up its organizations in the units, arranged the publication of clandestine newspapers for soldiers and sailors, and directed its educational work towards winning the troops over to the side of the revolutionary workers.

This activity gained particular intensity after the February Revolution of 1917. At the same time, the Party took to arming the working class and the village poor. On the initiative of the Communists of Petrograd, Moscow and other industrial centers, small units of a revolutionary military organization of workers called the Red Guard were raised in April 1917. Their nuclei consisted of detachments of armed industrial workers.

The Red Guard took part in the demonstrations of workers protesting against the policies of the bourgeois Provisional Government. Together with the troops who had sided with the Revolution, the Red Guard was engaged in suppressing the armed revolt of former czarist generals who tried to establish a military dictatorship and strangle the revolution in August 1917.

The activation and training of the Red Guard was supervised by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik² Party.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1977, pp. 82-83.

² The name "Bolshevik" emerged following the elections of the Party's leading bodies at the 2nd Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (1903) when Lenin's supporters gained the majority (*bolshinstvo* in Russian, hence Bolshevik — a member of the majority).

The Military Organization established at the Party's Central Committee in April 1917 was directly in charge of supplying the Red Guard with arms and training it in the art of warfare. The Military Organization was also responsible for supervising the activities of the Bolshevik organizations in the army and navy.

Lenin guided the activities of the CC Military Organization in mustering the armed forces for the uprising. While developing the issues of political and military strategy and tactics, he also looked into the problems of organizing and all-round training of the Red Guard units.

The Red Guard of Petrograd was the major armed force of the October Socialist Revolution. During the first weeks following the victory of the Revolution, the Red Guard, alongside the revolutionary soldiers and sailors, fought the counterrevolutionary forces in Petrograd, Moscow and other cities. Lenin wrote: "The Red Guards fought in the noble and supreme historical cause of liberating the working and exploited people from the yoke of the exploiters."¹

Throughout January and February 1918 the Red Guard units and the revolutionary troops quelled counterrevolutionary revolts in a number of central regions of the country, and Soviet power was established in central Russia, on the Don, and almost in the whole of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Urals.

The Red Guard was instrumental in breaking the bourgeois war machine and establishing a new system of government in the capital and the provinces. It fought counterrevolutionary elements, speculators, saboteurs and bandits, and performed guard duty at plants, warehouses, railroads and other important installations.

Thus, the Red Guard played a significant role in defending the gains of the October Socialist Revolution in the first months after it triumphed. These units of armed workers and peasants became the embryo of the future Red Army.

The old armed forces numbering about 8 million officers and men could not be used to defend the revolution. Most of the generals and officers had sided with the toppled exploiter classes. Besides, the combat capability of the old

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1977, p. 247.

army was utterly low. The army was disintegrating. The soldiers worn out by the imperialist war were deserting their lines and going home. Many of them did not understand that the revolution had not yet been completed and had to be defended with arms against a new and more powerful enemy.

By decision of Soviet power, the leadership in the old army was assumed by military-revolutionary committees. Their orders were binding on the army commanders. At the same time organizational work was started to democratize the army. All reactionary generals and officers were removed, all servicemen were made equal in their rights, and commanders were appointed by election at meetings and congresses. Simultaneously, the bodies of control were reorganized and a new machinery of military command was established.

In the meantime, imperialists were hatching plans to strangle the Soviet Republic. Just as Lenin had foreseen, all the reactionary forces of the old world united in their hatred of the first state of workers and peasants. In December 1917, the imperialists of Great Britain and France agreed upon an intervention into Soviet Russia so as to partition it and restore the dominance of capitalists, landowners, and foreign capital. They threatened to boycott and blockade the Soviet country and readied troops for the intervention. Kaiser's Germany, still at war with Russia, did not hurry to accept the Soviet proposals for a peace treaty.

Under the given circumstances, the Soviet country had to prepare in real earnest to repulse the interventionists. It became extremely urgent to replace the 200,000-strong Red Guard with an entirely new armed force—a numerically superior, powerful and battleworthy socialist army.

An Army of a New Type

The issue of building a Red Army was utterly new and had not yet been considered even theoretically. Said Lenin: "We undertook a task which nobody in the world has ever attempted on so large a scale."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 18-23, 1919. Report of the Central Committee, March 18", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 152.

What should such a new army be like? How, on what foundations should it be established?

In his works, Lenin developed the doctrine of the defense of the socialist homeland. He showed that the class enemies of the proletariat would never accept its victory and would try to recover their lost positions by armed force. Therefore the establishment of a military organization of the victorious proletariat was a vital necessity and a natural cause. Only with a mighty, well equipped and trained army could the people's power defeat the combined forces of imperialist intervention and internal counterrevolution and defend the revolutionary gains.

If the enemies of the Revolution were to start a war, then, Lenin said, the war in defense of the socialist homeland would be the most just, truly revolutionary and progressive of all the wars known to mankind. In such a war the socialist army would be defending the most progressive, truly democratic social system and the freedom and independence of a state of workers and peasants which was the hope and bulwark for the liberation struggle of the working people the world over.

The Party organized the Red Army on the same principles as all the other bodies of Soviet power. The building of our army, as Lenin emphasized, led to successful results only because it was carried out in the spirit of the general building of the Soviet state.

What are these principles?

The main principle of strengthening the defense of the country ruled by the working people is the indivisible leadership of the revolutionary Party in creating and developing the armed forces and organizing defense. Before the October Socialist Revolution and after its victory Lenin repeatedly pointed out that the Party must take the defense of the revolutionary gains in its hands. In 1918, on Lenin's initiative, the Central Committee of the Party adopted the decision "On the Policy of the Military Department" which stated that "the policy of the military department, just like of all the other departments and institutions is pursued in direct accordance with the overall guidelines issued by the Party through its Central Committee and under its direct control".

It was only in the power of the Party—expressing as it

did the interests and will of the working masses and drawing upon the theory of scientific socialism—to resolve the most complex problems of creating and strengthening the new army and defeating the enemies of the Soviet state.

The Red Army was created as a class instrument of a proletarian state; it was manned by workers and peasants and upheld the interests of the working people. Soviet power disarmed the exploiter classes, the bourgeoisie and feudal landowners, and barred their access to the ranks of the socialist army. "Ours is a class army directed against the bourgeoisie,"¹ Lenin wrote.

An important feature of the new army was its indestructible unity with the people. An armed force was created which, unlike the old czarist army and the modern imperialist armies, was not detached from nor opposed to the people but indivisibly linked with them by common purpose and interests. This unity is one of the mighty sources of the new army's power and invincibility.

In building the army, the Party also relied on Lenin's ideas of friendship among peoples and proletarian internationalism. Just like the Soviet state, its army is a single, united family of many nations and nationalities. In its ranks are representatives of all the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Many of the non-Russian peoples inhabiting the Russian Empire were barred from the old army. The czarist regime did not trust them, because the army was in itself an instrument of national oppression. In the Soviet country, all peoples are granted the honorable right to serve in the armed forces and defend the country. Right at its inception the Red Army had in its ranks working people of all the country's nations and nationalities and representatives of many nations from abroad who fought for Soviet power.

The internationalist nature of the Soviet armed forces consists in their being a bulwark of the liberation struggle of the working people and of peace among nations.

These are Lenin's basic socio-political principles which the Party relied upon from the outset in building the army.

Lenin also developed certain organizational principles of army structure. One of the fundamental principles among

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Tax in Kind", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1977, p. 351.

them was that of building a regular socialist army with professional commanders and political cadres, precise forms of organization, and a single system of methods of control, recruitment, training and education of the personnel.

The most important organizational principles of building a mighty, combat-ready socialist army are as follows:

- strict centralism, meaning a single nation-wide system underlying the creation, development and activity of the entire armed forces subordinated to their higher command and to the government;

- unity of command (introduced in the Red Army in 1925), i.e., the personal responsibility of the military leader or commander to the Party and government for his activity and the combat readiness of the troops under his command, his independence in making decisions and controlling the troops;

- firm discipline based on the political consciousness of the servicemen and their understanding of their military duty;

- high fighting efficiency and combat readiness of the armed forces ensured by the troops being supplied with modern weaponry and materiel and by the all-round combat training and moral and political education of the personnel.

The creation of a body of well-trained and politically educated commanders devoted to the people also ranks among the important principles of building a powerful and combat-ready army. Most of the officers of the old czarist army belonged to the exploiter classes and did not side with the Revolution. So, commanders for the new army were recruited from among the common people. They could command authority with the men and consolidate the socialist principles in the army. Such an army was to be invincible.

Historical experience has convincingly confirmed the vital import of Lenin's principles of building the armed forces. These principles served the Party as a firm basis on which it relied in its work during the period so crucial for the destiny of the Revolution. And today, too, they serve as guiding points in building and strengthening the Soviet Armed Forces and in organizing the defense of socialism.

The Revolution Must Know How to Defend Itself

The party appealed to the workers, peasants, soldiers and sailors to take an active part in raising the new army. The

Communists explained to the working people that the defense of the Revolution and Soviet power was a vital duty of the workers and peasants.

On Lenin's motion the issue of creating the new army was considered by the CC Military Organization. On January 28, 1918 the Council of People's Commissars under Lenin's chairmanship adopted the Decree on the Organization of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. It stated that the Red Army was being created in view of the transfer of power to the working and exploited masses and the establishment of a socialist state, to serve as its armed stronghold both against the toppled feudal landowners and bourgeoisie and the external counterrevolution. The decree stressed the strictly class nature of the army and its revolutionary spirit: "The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army is being created out of the most conscious and organized elements of the working masses... The Red Army can be joined by anyone who is prepared to dedicate all his abilities, his life to the defense of the gains of the October Revolution, the power of the Soviets and socialism."

The army was to be manned on a voluntary basis by working people not younger than 18 years, irrespective of their creed, racial and national identity. All those desiring to join had to have recommendations from military committees, Party, trade union or other mass organizations standing on the platform of Soviet power. In cases entire units joined, mutual responsibility and nominal voting was necessary.

Under the decree all servicemen of the Red Army were fully maintained by the state. The disabled dependants of the Red Army servicemen were maintained by local Soviets.

The Council of People's Commissars was proclaimed by decree as the supreme governing body of the Red Army.

On February 11, 1918 Lenin signed the Decree on the Organization of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Navy which also had been adopted by the Council of People's Commissars.

The decrees were met with approval by the workers, peasants, the revolutionary soldiers and sailors of the disbanded old army units. Under the leadership of the Party, detachments of the Red Army were activated

throughout the land.

The 1st Red Army Corps was raised by Petrograd workers and revolutionary soldiers. Following Petrograd, Red Army units and formations were raised in Moscow, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kostroma, Kazan and other industrial centers. In the streets of cities and villages there appeared posters reading: "Have You Enlisted in the Red Army?", "Everyone to the Defense of the Republic of Soviets!"

In a short time, dozens of thousands of workers and poor peasants of Byelorussia, the Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Urals, and the Volga Region enlisted in the Red Army.

The activation of units of the new army was started at the battle fronts (where not all of the troops of the old army had yet been disbanded). Soldiers were joining the Red Army not only singly, but in entire units. Many aviation detachments and flying and technical schools decided to go over to the Red Army.

Revolutionary sailors swelled the ranks of the Red Army in the thousands. They were organized into crews of armored trains, reconnaissance detachments and landing parties.

The members of the first unions of working youth, the organizations of the future Young Communist League, took an active part in raising the Red regiments. At meetings of youth organizations in Petrograd, young workers adopted passionate resolutions calling for the defense of Soviet power, and the organizations enlisted in Red Army detachments and regiments in a body.

While creating the new army, the Party took measures to organize military control and provide it with arms and food supplies. Everywhere the soldiers and commanders were undergoing training, for which purpose military departments were set up at local Soviets, and headquarters were staffed at combat units and formations.

This was a time of extremely difficult conditions. The country was ruined by more than 3 years of the First World war waged by the Entente powers (Russia, Great Britain, France and, by the end of the war, the United States) on the one hand, and Germany and her allies on the other hand.

Still, the building of the new army was persistently pursued.

Baptism of Fire

Expressing the will of the people, the Soviet government repeatedly appealed to all warring powers to stop the war. But Great Britain, France and the USA refused to accept the offer. So Soviet Russia signed an armistice with Germany, followed by peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. On February 18, 1918 the German troops, in violation of the armistice, launched an offensive along the entire front from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Under the pressure of the advancing German army, the troops of the old Russian army fell back from their positions in a disorderly retreat en masse. The enemy invaded the Ukraine and Byelorussia, captured Latvia, Estonia, and threatened Petrograd. The Soviet country was in dire peril.

The rulers of the Western countries were convinced that Soviet power would hold no more than a couple of weeks. *The New York Times* predicted then that someone sufficiently strong would appear any day now to snatch power from the Bolsheviks.

At this crucial moment, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party exercised great determination and energy in dealing with the situation. It called upon the Party committees, Soviets and military bodies to take urgent measures to provide the front with the newly activated military units, build fortifications and organize defense against the enemy.

On February 1918 Lenin wrote the appeal "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger!" which was broadcast and distributed everywhere as an appeal of the Council of People's Commissars. It read: "In order to save this exhausted and ravaged country from new ordeals of war we decided to make a very great sacrifice and informed the Germans of our readiness to sign their terms of peace... The German Government is evidently in no hurry to reply. It obviously does not want peace. Fulfilling the task with which it has been charged by the capitalists of all countries, German militarism wants to strangle the Russian and Ukrainian workers and peasants, to return the land to the landowners, the mills and factories to the bankers, and power to the monarchy. The German generals want to establish their 'order' in Petrograd and Kiev. *The Socialist Republic of*

Soviets is in gravest danger... The Council of People's Commissars resolves: 1) The country's entire manpower and resources are placed entirely at the service of revolutionary defence. 2) All Soviets and revolutionary organisations are ordered to defend every position to the last drop of blood."¹

The same day Lenin sent a telephone message to the Petrograd city and district Party committees, in which he urged them to immediately raise all workers for the defense of the city.

The situation was, indeed, critical. Skeptics doubted whether after a protracted, exhausting and hated war the workers and peasants would really respond to the Bolsheviks who only recently had demanded an end to the war and were now calling on the people to take up arms.

But the workers and peasants remembered too well not only the ordeals of the imperialist war, but also their unbearable life before the Revolution. It was the Bolsheviks who had opened their eyes to their sorry plight of slaves under the oppression of capitalists and big landowners. And it was the Bolsheviks who had showed the working people that the world war had been waged not for the homeland, but for the profits and privileges of the oppressors they overthrew in October 1917. The people upheld the cause of the Bolsheviks: the German imperialists together with the imperialists of the whole world were again set on reinstating oppression and bondage.

The appeal to stand up for the defense of the socialist homeland stirred up the working class, the revolutionary soldiers and sailors. The whistles of factories, locomotives and ships sounded alarm all over Petrograd. Groups of armed workers hurried to the headquarters of the Revolution at the Smolny Institute, to the district Party committees and Soviets. Everywhere at mass meetings the workers enlisted in the Red Army. In Petrograd, within several days, 60,000 men were mobilized, of which 20,000 were sent to the front line. In Moscow, 20,000 men joined the Red Army. Dozens of new Red Army detachments were raised in the Ukraine, the Urals, Byelorussia and the Volga Region.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 30.

The German forces approached Pskov and Narva, and posed a direct threat to Petrograd. The first Red Army regiments, along with the Red Guard and workers' detachments, manned the defenses and engaged the enemy in bitter fighting.

The German advance on Petrograd was stemmed on February 23 (now a national holiday, the Soviet Army Day). In the Ukraine and Byelorussia the newly formed Soviet regiments put up stiff resistance to the German invaders. The plans of the German imperialists to finish with Soviet power at one stroke failed. Afraid lest the hostilities turn into a long drawn-out war, the German command was forced to call off the offensive and agree to conclude peace. On March 3, 1918 the Brest Peace Treaty was signed. The terms of the peace were forbiddingly harsh for the Soviets: the country lost large territories, but it had to take this step, because it desperately needed a respite.

The Party and government used the respite to strengthen Soviet power and the country's defense capability, restore the war-ravaged economy, and set going industrial production, transport and food supplies.

The building of the Red Army was continued: a system of bodies of military command was set up, a single organization of troops was introduced, and the numerous detachments were brought together to form regular regiments, brigades and divisions. The *Vsevobuch* system of general military training was set up, under which every working man had to undergo a two-week part-time course of training.

The Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RMC) and the All-Russia General Headquarters, the supreme executive military body, were established, and the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic was created. Through these bodies the Party exercised direct leadership of military operations.

The Party and the Soviet government organized production of military equipment and armaments, which the new army needed badly, because a considerable part of the old army's materiel and many of the munitions factories were seized by the counterrevolutionary troops and the German interventionists.

At that time the Red Army was equipped with artillery,

rifles and machine guns, and, in addition, the cavalry units had sabres and lances. Military aviation was yet in an embryonic state—throughout the Civil War the Red Army numbered some 350 airplanes. There was also an armored force consisting of several dozen armored cars, tanks and armored trains. The Navy was an important fighting force. During the Civil War over 30 naval, river and lake flotillas were organized mostly out of the ships of the Baltic Fleet which played a great role in defending the cradle of the Revolution, Petrograd.

Instead of free elections of commanders, their appointment was introduced to consolidate the management of troops. The posts of commanders were filled primarily by Communists from among the workers versed in battlecraft, by seasoned soldiers and sailors, and also by former officers and generals who sided with Soviet power.

It was found expedient to use the military experience and skills of officers and generals of the old army—under the condition of strict control of their activity by the Party and state. They were appointed to posts of commanders, headquarters staff and instructors of military schools.

The most important task of creating and strengthening the new army was the training of commanders from among workers and peasants. During the Civil War, the main form of training commanders was short-term courses from 2 to 8 months. The first 10 schools for commanders were opened in February 1918. By the end of the year there were already 50 of them, and by March 1919 their number had exceeded 100. They enrolled mostly battle-experienced Red Army soldiers, and trained commanders for the infantry, artillery, cavalry and logistical units. Courses were also organized at the headquarters of fronts and armies. High-level commanders underwent training at the newly organized General Staff Academy, the Artillery, Military Engineering, Naval, Logistical and Medical Academies and some other higher military schools. There were also military-political courses, and in 1919 the Teachers Training Institute of the Red Army was inaugurated, which eventually developed into the Lenin Military-Political Academy.

Party functionaries who had distinguished themselves as organizers of revolutionary action and of battle units were

appointed to top military posts. N. V. Krylenko, a Party member since 1904, was appointed the first Commander-in-Chief and People's Commissar for War of the Soviet Republic. He had served in the old army, advanced in rank to ensign, and as a member of the Bolshevik Party carried on revolutionary work among the soldiers. Then he was actively involved in the October Socialist Revolution.

Right from the outset, the Party attached paramount importance to the political education of the Red Army soldiers and commanders. Lenin had pointed out that "success in modern warfare is impossible without intelligent soldiers and sailors who possess initiative".¹ He called upon all Communists to explain to the Red Army men the policy of the Party and the aims of their liberation struggle and fortify their morale and confidence in victory.

To promote the influence of the Party in the troops and to implement its policy, the office of military commissars was introduced in the army and navy by a decision of the Party's Central Committee and Government in the spring of 1918. In the regulations issued to this effect, it was stated that the military commissars were the direct "political body of Soviet power in the armed forces". The office of military commissars was introduced in all military units, formations, on battleships, in military organizations and educational establishments; in the armies and fronts military commissars were appointed as members of revolutionary military councils. Their principal duties were the political education of the servicemen, guidance of all Party and political work, political supervision of the activities of the former officers of the old army assigned to posts of command, and participation in decision making on all issues of combat activities.

The military commissars, courageous Communists devoted to the Party and Revolution heart and soul, played an important role in building the Red Army and fighting the enemies of Soviet power. They appeared in the most trying and dangerous parts of the battlefield and led the men into action. Their prestige and determination helped maintain strict revolutionary discipline in the troops.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Fall of Port Arthur", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 1977, p. 51.

From the outset of activating military units, Party organizations were set up in them. They shouldered the job of increasing fighting efficiency, discipline and morale in the units, conducted political instruction among the men, and helped the commissars and commanders in dealing with all questions of military activity, logistics, training, and the troops' everyday life. In action, the Communists advanced in the front ranks.

With workers and peasants turned soldiers joining the ranks, Party organizations swelled, especially during heavy fighting. One of the leaflets of that time read: "The title of Communist implies many duties but grants only one privilege—to be the first to fight for the Revolution."

In April 1918 the All-Russia Central Executive Committee approved the text of the first Soviet Oath of Allegiance, called the Solemn Promise. It read:

"I, a son of the working people and a citizen of the Soviet Republic, assume the title of soldier of the worker-peasant army..."

"I commit myself, at the first call of the Worker-Peasant Government, to come to the defense of the Soviet Republic against any threat and encroachment on the part of all of its enemies, and not to spare either effort or my very life in the struggle for the Russian Soviet Republic, for the cause of socialism and the fraternity of peoples..."

The text of the oath was printed in the *Red Army Man's Book* which Lenin looked through and approved. Apart from the oath, it listed the main government decrees as well as other documents on the rights and duties of Red Army servicemen. One of the rules stated:

"Attention, comrade! Study the oath before signing it. What have you been called up for? Who has called you up? You have been called up by the working people, and the cause you have been called up for is your own cause... The Red Army will fight only those who dare oppose the will of the working people, who will want to take away from them the land and property and throw a slave's noose on them. It will defend you and your brothers.

"To serve it means to serve the entire working people. To betray it means to betray the people. Its enemies are your enemies. Its victory is your victory, while its defeat means your death. It is you yourself. So serve it like you

would serve yourself."

Apart from political instruction, great attention was attached to military education of the personnel and to asserting strict discipline in the troops. It was a new kind of discipline based not on fear and humiliation of the men, but on a sense of their duty in defending the socialist country.

The introduction of military regulations was of great importance in asserting order and discipline in the armed forces. In 1918 the All-Russia Central Executive Committee considered and put into effect the Interior Service Regulations, the Garrison and Guard Duty Regulations, the Field Service Regulations, and in early 1919 the Disciplinary and Drill Regulations of the Red Army. The regulations ruled the details and procedures of the life and activities of troops, and defined the basic principles of organization, order and discipline in the armed forces.

The first months of the Soviet power's existence and the first engagements of the freshly mustered regiments of the socialist army convincingly confirmed the rightness of Lenin's thesis that the Revolution must know how to defend itself and that the principal weapon of defending the revolutionary achievements of the working people is the army of a new type, strong in its class cohesion, firm discipline, political consciousness and high revolutionary morale. The Party and Soviet state progressed step by step in creating such an army. As a result, the young Soviet Republic could stand up for its independence and the achievements of the October Socialist Revolution, and emerge victorious in the fierce struggle against its numerous enemies.

The Struggle Against the Interventionists and White Guard Troops

The Soviet country was living through hard times. Three and a half years of imperialist war had sapped the people's energy. Many factories were forced to close down because of shortage of raw materials and manpower. The level of industrial production, low as it had already been, plummeted several times. The transportation system was ruined. Agriculture had fallen into decay. The village rich, the

kulaks, who thrived on the exploitation of the farmhands, tried to crush the nation's will by hunger, hiding grain reserves, and when their surplus of grain was expropriated, they put up armed resistance. Those of the feudal landowners, capitalists and other hostile elements who had remained in the country also opposed Soviet power and fomented counterrevolutionary revolts.

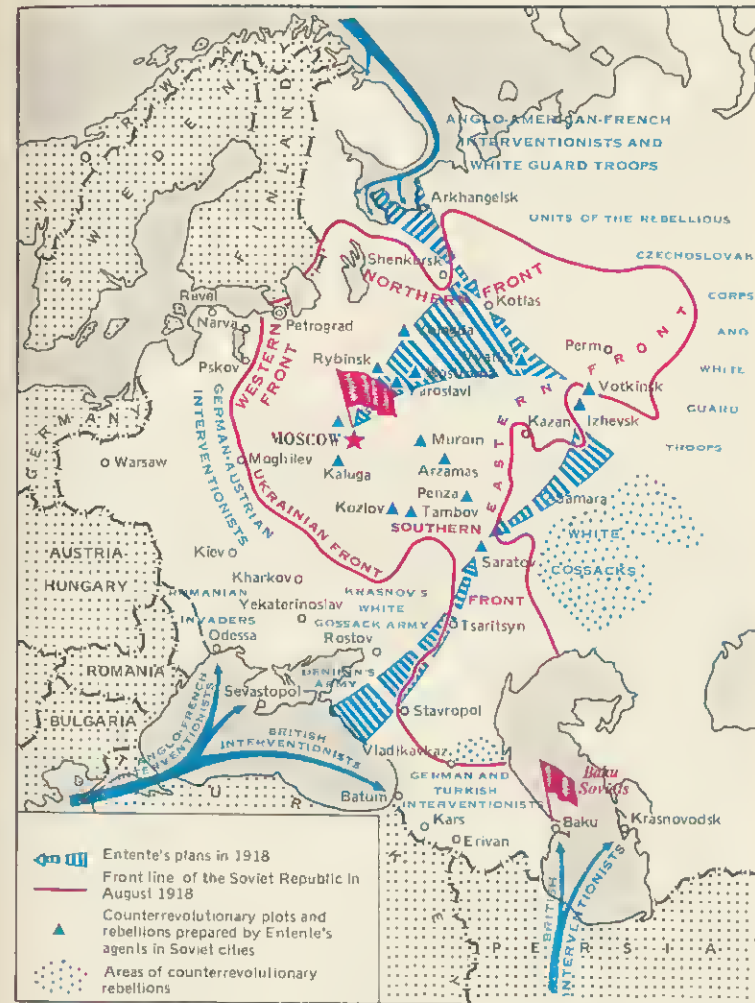
While dealing with the counterrevolution, the workers and peasants got down to restoring the economy with all the means and resources available.

However, the respite the country had gained after the Brest Peace Treaty did not last long. The imperialists could not accept the birth of the first socialist state. The Entente, a bloc of imperialist powers led by the USA, Great Britain and France, decided to embark on an open military campaign against the Soviet Republic.

The Republic in a Circle of Fire

In March 1918 the ruling quarters of the USA, Great Britain, France and other imperialist powers decided on a joint military intervention in the internal affairs of Soviet Russia. Shortly after, British and French troops, followed by a US contingent, landed at Murmansk. In August they seized Arkhangelsk. Intervention was also launched in the Far East. In April, Japanese, British and US troops landed at Vladivostok. The German imperialists continued their occupation of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and the Baltic provinces. In violation of the peace treaty, they occupied the Crimea, and in May, together with Turkish troops, invaded Transcaucasia.

Enjoying the support of the interventionists, the internal counterrevolution advanced against Soviet power—the bourgeois nationalists in the Ukraine and the Caucasus, and the White Guard troops and kulaks on the Don and in the north and east of the country. The White Guard, a counterrevolutionary body of troops, was built up by officers of the old army. It involved anti-Soviet elements, kulaks, a part of the rich peasantry, and deceived soldiers of the old army. The governments of the USA, Great Britain, France and other countries paid lavishly to have the White Guard troops mustered and provided them with sizable supplies of weaponry and equipment.



The Soviet Republic Besieged. 1918

In the Volga Region and Siberia the imperialists organized a counterrevolutionary revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps by bribing its officers and deceiving the men. The corps had been formed some time before the October Socialist Revolution out of the Czech and Slovak POWs to fight the Germans. In early January 1918 it was officially incorporated into the French Army. The Soviet Government gave the corps the opportunity to leave for France via Vladivostok. The trains of the 60,000-strong corps stretched along the railroads from Penza to Vladivostok. Under the influence of counterrevolutionary officers, the corps units launched a revolt on May 25, and together with the White Guard troops seized the Volga Region, the Urals and a considerable part of Siberia.

In this way the international and internal counterrevolution formed a closed circle of fronts around the Soviet Republic.

Vladimir Lenin exposed the utterly despicable role the US imperialists played in this intervention. In his "Letter to American Workers", he wrote: "At this very moment, the American multimillionaires, these modern slaveowners, have turned an exceptionally tragic page in the bloody history of bloody imperialism by giving their approval—whether direct or indirect, open or hypocritically concealed, makes no difference—to the armed expedition launched by the brutal Anglo-Japanese imperialists for the purpose of throttling the first socialist republic."¹

The imperialists of the Entente powers misled world public opinion with deceitful statements about wanting to "help" the Russian people suppress "anarchy", save Russia from the Germans, and "establish freedom and democracy". In the areas the interventionists and White Guard troops occupied, they abolished the Soviets, installed counterrevolutionary regimes, committed plunder and visited savage reprisals upon the people.

In the north, the British and US invaders threw over 50,000 people into prisons and death camps. In Arkhangelsk, the interventionists imprisoned 38,000 people, of which 8,000 were executed by firing squad and over a thousand were starved and tortured to death. Many people

died at the death camps on Mudyug Island and in the Kola Peninsula.

The interventionists and White Guard troops were running amok in Siberia where they herded over 80,000 people into concentration camps, shooting and torturing to death 40,000 of them. The British invaders acted in the same manner in the south. Jointly with local nationalists, they dealt with the revolutionary workers and activists of the people's power. In September 1918, they shot 26 Baku commissars, leaders of the Soviet government in Azerbaijan.

By the middle of 1918 three-quarters of the country's territory was in the hands of the White Guard and the interventionists. Simultaneously with the military intervention, the imperialists imposed an economic blockade on the Soviet Republic.

Under these conditions, the Party appealed to the workers and peasants to rise against the enemies of the Revolution and redouble their efforts in creating the Red Army. It numbered a little over 300,000 men at that time, while the interventionists and White Guard had mustered about 700,000 well armed and trained troops.

The former procedure of voluntary enlistment proved to be inadequate in providing regular replacements to man a numerically strong army. A new approach had to be sought in building the armed forces. So in late May 1918, the All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), the first Soviet Constitution, which proclaimed the defense of the socialist homeland a duty of all Soviet citizens. Significantly, the right to defend the Revolution with arms was granted to the working people only. All the other were to perform military duties not related to service in combat units.

The situation of the Republic was becoming alarmingly grave. The most critical state of affairs had developed in the eastern part of the country where the counterrevolutionary forces, pressing the disunited Red Army units back, occupied town after town. By the end of July, they had seized all of the Volga Region, and their march on Moscow, which had been the Republic's capital since March 1918, became an imminent threat.

The destiny of Revolution, as Lenin pointed out, hinged on the Eastern Front. The Party's Central Committee adopted

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, p. 61.

a resolution on boosting the strength of the Eastern Front. A Revolutionary Military Council and Headquarters of the Front were established, 5 armies were activated as well as several air detachments and the Volga Flotilla.

Mass conscription was announced and regular units were formed according to a uniform system. By the end of October 1918 the strength of the Red Army had reached some 800,000 men. Communists and Party workers were urgently despatched to the Eastern Front. Revolutionary military councils were placed at the head of every army as bodies of military and political management, and political departments were established in the formations to enhance the influence of the Party and guide political work. V. V. Kuibyshev, a prominent Party worker, was appointed political commissar of the 1st Army, while M. N. Tukhachevsky, a talented commander and former lieutenant of the old army who had joined the Communist Party in April 1918, was assigned to the post of army commander. Among the RMC members of the 2nd Army was S. I. Gusev, a noted Bolshevik and active participant in the October Socialist Revolution, and Professor P. K. Sternberg, a famous astronomer and a leader of the Revolution in Moscow. N. G. Markin, a sailor, a revolutionary organizer in the Baltic Navy, who raised the Volga Flotilla on Lenin's personal assignment, was appointed its commissar.

The First Military Successes

Red Army troops engaged the enemy in stubborn fighting along the entire Eastern Front. The commanders and political workers the Party had detached to the front managed to muster and rally the troops under the harshest combat conditions, establish proper control, and develop a flexible tactic of combat. The troops acted bravely and determinedly, employing skilful maneuver tactics and inflicting defeat after defeat on the enemy.

After drawn-out battles, Kazan, one of the largest cities on the Volga, was liberated on September 10. In a letter to the troops, Lenin noted that the recapture of Kazan "marked a turning-point in the soldiers' mood, their change-over to firm, resolute and victorious actions".¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 99.

For valor displayed in action at Kazan, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee awarded the 5th Latvian Rifle Regiment the Honorary Revolutionary Red Banner. This first Soviet military award was instituted on August 3, 1918. Following heavy fighting, on September 12, the 1st Army liberated another large town on the Volga, Simbirsk (now Ulyanovsk), Lenin's home town. The 24th Division under G. D. Gai, which distinguished itself in this operation, was given the name of Simbirsk Iron Division. The liberators of Simbirsk sent the leader of the Revolution the following telegram: "Dear Vladimir Ilyich, we have avenged one of your wounds by taking your home town, and shall take Samara to avenge the other."

Lenin had been gravely wounded in an attempt on his life by counterrevolutionary terrorists on August 30, and at that time was undergoing treatment. Excited by the news about victories on the Eastern Front, Lenin wrote back to the troops of the 1st Army: "The capture of Simbirsk, my home town, is a wonderful tonic, the best treatment for my wounds. I feel a new lease of life and energy. Congratulations to the Red Army men on their victory, and, on behalf of all working people, thanks for all their sacrifices."¹

With the liberation of Samara (now Kuibyshev) and Syzran in early October, the entire Volga Region was wrenched from the enemy. The Red Army pursued the offensive in the direction of the Urals. The guerrilla army under the command of V. K. Blyukher distinguished itself in these battles. A Bolshevik, a former industrial worker, Blyukher skilfully commanded the troops and displayed personal valor which won him the Order of the Red Banner No. 1. This military decoration was instituted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee in September 1918.

The sailors of the Volga Flotilla acted bravely and competently as well. In the autumn of 1918 the Flotilla took part in 30 engagements, and rendered the troops important aid with fire support and landing operations. During an engagement on the River Kama one of the gunboats was blast-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Telegram to the Penza Gubernia Executive Committee and the Revolutionary War Council of the First Army", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 98.

ed with enemy fire and burst into flames. The Flotilla commissar, Nikolai Markin, ordered the crew to abandon the ship and swim to friendly shore. He himself remained on the battle bridge and fired the machine gun until a bullet cut his life short.

Simultaneously with the battles on the Eastern Front, the Red Army had to beat off the fierce attacks of the counter-revolution in the country's south. Supported by the German, British, French and US imperialists, the White Guard generals Denikin and Krasnov had built up a considerable force. Part of the White Guard troops advanced towards Voronezh from which Denikin intended to press home the attack on Moscow while the rest of the forces pushed relentlessly to Tsaritsyn (now Volgograd) so as to cut off the center of the Republic from the Volga and the Caucasus.

The Soviet troops in this area were numerically superior to the enemy but they lacked cohesion. They had to be united under single command. The Party Central Committee sent J. V. Stalin and K. Y. Voroshilov to coordinate and rally the troops and help organize the defeat of the enemy.

The 10th Army formed of Tsaritsyn workers, Donbas coal miners and Ukrainian peasants under the command of Voroshilov fought bravely in the bitter battles at Tsaritsyn. After a combat-punctuated trek of 800 kilometers, the Steel Division under the command of D. P. Zhloba, a former Donbas coal miner, arrived at Tsaritsyn from the North Caucasus and took General Krasnov's White Guard troops in the rear.

Communists were the soul of the Tsaritsyn defense. The local Party organization made it incumbent on every Communist to be in the front ranks of the city's defenders. In those days 10,000 Tsaritsyn workers joined the ranks. The front commanders reported that the Communists and workers exerted a marked cohesive influence on the troops, increasing their tenacity.

The battles at Tsaritsyn raised to glory the national hero S. M. Budyonny, who eventually became Marshal of the Soviet Union. Here he commanded the 1st Cavalry Division which fought a number of successful battles and inflicted substantial losses on the enemy. The division was awarded an Honorary Red Banner for its merits in action.

During these battles distinguished valor was also displayed by the commanders of armored trains and the pilots of the Red Air Force.

In the summer and autumn of 1918 the Red troops engaged Denikin's Army in bitter fighting in the North Caucasus. The enemy succeeded in cutting off the Red Army units from their main supply base, Tsaritsyn. The Soviet troops had to hold the enemy's pressure under extremely difficult conditions. The 11th Soviet Army was forced to withdraw to the vicinity of Astrakhan. The Taman Army under the command of Ivan Matveyev, one of the organizers of the Red Army in the south, made a remarkable long march when the enemy cut it off at Novorossiisk. Experiencing an acute shortage of ammunition, food and clothing, and guarding a huge train of refugees, women and children, the army bitterly fought its way through to Novorossiisk, Tuapse and across the mountains to link up with the troops of the North Caucasus.

Intense fighting with the interventionists and White Guard was also in progress in the north of the country. Under the guidance of the local Party organizations and Soviets, armed units of workers, peasants and office workers were mustered in a short time. Armed detachments of workers from Moscow and Petrograd, Baltic Navy sailors and Red Army units came to their aid. The sailors of the North Dvina Flotilla were actively involved in the fighting.

In January 1919, the troops of the Northern Front gained a major victory at Shenkursk and forced the enemy into a headlong retreat, inflicting heavy losses on him. In one of the engagements along the Arkhangelsk to Vologda railroad a unit of Red Army men and sailors routed a combined battalion of British, French and US troops numbering 500 men. A Red Army unit under the command of the Petrograd worker Ivan Spiridonov, the Belgorod Battalion, a detachment of Finnish internationalists and other elements of the Red Army inflicted telling blows on the interventionists in the Murmansk sector.

The victory in the north was important for the Soviet Republic in that it wrecked the attempts of the interventionists to destroy Soviet power in these areas, to link up with the counterrevolution in the east and penetrate the heartland.

In the west, the Red Army had to beat off the onslaught of the German invaders, White Guard troops and Ukrainian nationalists. Workers and peasants of the Ukraine formed the 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Soviet divisions. Ukrainian and Byelorussian guerrillas actively harassed the enemy in the occupied areas.

In November 1918, important international events occurred. Germany and its allies surrendered to the Entente powers. A revolution swept Germany and Hungary. The Soviet Government annulled the Brest Treaty. The Red Army expelled the German invaders from the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic republics.

But now, with the end of the First World War, the Soviet Republic came face to face with the Entente powers who undertook measures to step up military intervention in the internal affairs of the country. A squadron of British and French ships invaded the Black Sea. Large expedition forces of the interventionists captured Odessa, Sevastopol, Novorossiisk and Batumi. The troops of the White Guard generals Krasnov and Denikin received new substantial aid from the Entente powers and set off from the south towards the heartland.

The situation on the Southern Front became aggravated and posed the greatest threat to the Soviet Republic now. The Soviet Government took extraordinary measures to reinforce the front. The Party Central Committee announced a new mobilization of Party members and detached thousands of Communists to the Southern Front. Battle-seasoned divisions and regiments were moved to the south from the Eastern Front, followed by reserve components.

An extraordinary body, the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense under Lenin's chairmanship, was established on November 30, 1918 to mobilize all the available forces in the land and direct the economic and war effort.

Political bodies, commanders and Communists carried on tireless work to strengthen the army. They explained to the men the policies of the Party which expressed the vital interests of the working people and the just aims the Red Army was fighting for. Particular attention was attached to consolidating discipline and order, and to unquestioning execution of combat orders.

In January 1919, the Red Army went over to a broad offensive along the entire breadth of the Southern Front. Though inferior to the enemy in technical equipment, the Soviet troops demonstrated superiority in revolutionary morale and battlecraft.

Especially revealing in this respect was the behavior of Cossack troops. The Cossacks were a special group represented by peasants who had moved to the Lower Don, Kuban and other areas and settled there permanently. A considerable part of the poor Cossacks heartily supported Soviet power. The Red Army incorporated a number of Cossack regiments and divisions. The rich Cossacks, however, and part of the deceived poor and middle peasants fought on the side of the White Guard. Clandestine Bolshevik organizations carried on work among these Cossacks, explaining to them the policies of Soviet power. The defeats the White Guard troops suffered accelerated their disintegration. One after another the Cossack regiments defied the orders of the White officers, abandoned their positions, and left for home. The Cossack regiments in the *stanitsas* (large Cossack settlements) of Veshenskaya and Kazanskaya revolted, and their example was followed by another 8 regiments. Many Cossacks surrendered to the Red Army. The reports coming from the Southern Front stated that the number of POWs was rising: the 25th, 26th and 27th mounted and the 24th and 25th foot regiments had surrendered in a body.

Thus, the struggle for a just cause and for the interests of the working people gained the Red Army success after success, which in the end led to the utter defeat of the White Cossack Army of General Krasnov.

In the south of the Ukraine, Red Army units and guerrilla detachments defeated the French and Greek troops in the vicinity of Odessa. Revolutionary unrest began in the land and naval forces of the interventionists. In Odessa, Jeanne Labourbe, a courageous French woman, an organizer of foreign sections in the Russian Communist Party, carried on political education among French soldiers and sailors; she was captured and shot by the interventionists' counterintelligence service. In France and Greece, the working people staged protest meetings in defense of Soviet Russia, which forced the interventionists to leave the south

of Russia and the Ukraine hastily.

Soviet power and its armed forces thus proved their might and durability. The first attempts of the imperialists and the White Guard to destroy the Soviet Republic failed. The efforts the Party and the working people had expended in building a mighty army were hearing appreciable results. In early 1919 the strength of the Red Army stood at over 1,600,000.

The Decisive Battles

The Counterrevolution Prepares for a New Campaign

After having curbed the onslaught of the interventionists and White Guard troops on all major fronts, the Red Army liberated by the spring of 1919 the greater part of the Ukraine, the Don region, Latvia, Lithuania, the Western Urals and almost all of the Donbas, and was engaged in fighting to liberate Estonia, Western Byelorussia and the coastal regions of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

For all that, the situation still remained complex and tense. The building of the Red Army had not yet been completed. The troops experienced shortages of armaments, food supplies, and military specialists. In the meantime, the enemies were hatching new plots to destroy the Soviet Republic.

In early 1919, representatives of the Entente powers met in Paris to draw up the peace terms with vanquished Germany. But the imperialists were preoccupied not so much with the issues of peace as with the schemes of liquidating Soviet power in Russia. The US President Wilson brought to the Paris Conference a map outlining the "proposed borders of Russia". The Soviet people were offered to retain but the Central Russian Upland, and that—under the control of the Western powers. All the other territories, including the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic provinces, the Caucasus and Siberia, were to become colonies of the imperialists. The internal counterrevolution was assigned the main role in destroying the Soviet Republic. New plans were elaborated at the Entente headquarters to supply the White Guard forces with weaponry and join them with the interventionists and the armies of the nations neighboring on

Russia so as to launch a new predatory campaign against the Soviet country.

The enemies succeeded in bringing together a sizable force. A 300,000-strong army under the White Guard Admiral Kolchak posed a threat in the east. The army was raised in Siberia with the aid of the US, British and French interventionists. The US government alone supplied Kolchak's troops with 400,000 rifles, over 1,000 machine guns, hundreds of artillery pieces, and other weapons and equipment. Kolchak received a lot of weaponry from the imperialists of Great Britain, France and Japan as well. The number of foreign troops in Siberia exceeded 118,000 at that time. General Janin of France was the advisor on combat operations at Kolchak's headquarters. The British General Knox was in charge of logistics.

General Yudenich's White Guard troops were poised to fall on Petrograd. They were supported by the British fleet and the army of bourgeois Poland. In the south, Denikin's army was preparing for a new inroad. Anglo-American interventionists and White Guard troops under General Miller were active in the north. The situation of the Soviet country became detrimentally aggravated as the combined forces of the interventionists and internal counterrevolution encircled it in a ring again.

The greatest danger was created by Kolchak's Army which embarked on a large offensive in the spring of 1919. After having captured the town of Ufa in the middle of March, it advanced on Samara and Kazan so as to reach the Volga and link up with Denikin's armies in the south and the interventionists' troops in the north. The Eastern Front again became the main front where the Revolution had to be defended.

At that time (March 1919) the Party convened its 8th Congress to consider the prospects of the country's socialist development. Apart from adopting a new Party Program, the Congress dwelled extensively on military issues.

The report of the Central Committee which Lenin read to the Congress presented a picture of the domestic and international situation of the country and provided the answers to the most complex questions history had posed to the young Soviet state and the Party, the world's first ruling party of the working class. The main task was to

consolidate the new social system and defend it against the onslaught of its enemies. Lenin noted that if the working class wanted to preserve and strengthen its state, it had to prove it by its military organization as well.

The decisions of the Congress embodied Lenin's ideas about the building of a class conscious regular army with a single system of command and strict discipline. The Congress pointed out the big role the military commissars and Party organizations played in carrying on political work in the Red Army. The troops in which such work was conducted with the greatest care were better organized, better disciplined, and scored more victories. The Congress resolved to establish the Political Department of the RMC of the Republic. This decision laid down the foundation for creating an orderly system of political bodies in the Soviet Armed Forces.

The primary task of the Red Army now was to check and defeat Kolchak's troops. Lenin was pointing out that the destiny of Revolution was being decided at the Eastern front.

As before, the Bolshevik Party led the people's effort in curbing the enemy's advance. The Party's Central Committee worked out measures for concentrating forces against Kolchak. In the spring of 1919, some 20,000 Party members joined the Red Army. The Young Communist League detached 3,000 of its members to the Eastern Front, the trade unions mobilized 60,000 men, and 25,000 of the village poor joined the effort. It was decided to raise the strength of the Red Army to 3,000,000.

The workers of the Kazan Railroad's Moscow depot decided to work gratis every Saturday evening until full victory over Kolchak. On May 11, 205 workers and clerks of the Moscow-Kazan Railroad participated in the *subbotnik* (from the Russian *subbota*—Saturday). Their example was followed by workers throughout the land. Lenin called these *subbotniks* a "great beginning" which revealed the high revolutionary consciousness of the working people.

All the nations of Russia joined in the struggle for Soviet power. Lenin's idea of uniting the armed forces of the Soviet republics into one body was of tremendous importance. At that time, apart from the Russian Republic which was the largest in population and area, there existed

in the territory of the former Russian state the Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Turkestan Soviet Republics (the latter cut off from the heartland by battle fronts). In the other areas—Transcaucasia and Estonia—power was in the hands of the counterrevolution.

The Soviet republics had their own military formations and command. Lenin drew up a draft directive of the Central Committee on uniting the military forces. He wrote that a necessary condition for victory in this war was the creation of a single command of all the components of the Red Army and the strictest centralization in dealing with all the forces and resources of the socialist republics. Lenin's idea was supported by all Soviet republics.

On June 1, 1919 the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, with the participation of the representatives of the republics' governments, adopted the decree "On Uniting the Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia, the Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Byelorussia for the Struggle Against World Imperialism". This unification also involved the combined management of the economy, transport and finances. The armies of the republics came under the complete subordination to the Supreme Command of the Red Army.

The Defeat of Kolchak

In the spring and summer of 1919, bitter fighting raged on all fronts and was especially fierce on the Eastern Front which presented the gravest danger to the Republic. While the Soviet troops were retreating, the Red Army command, political workers and Communists carried on intensive work to redeploy the combat forces, feed fresh troops to the fronts, and marshal the men to bold and decisive action. After wearing down the forces of the enemy, the Red Army went over to the offensive in April 1919.

The Eastern Front's Southern Group under M. V. Frunze, commander, and V. V. Kuibyshev, RMC member, was charged with the most difficult mission. As one of the participants in the events recalled, "the remarkable organizing talent of Frunze and his unerring intuition in military matters" enabled the Southern Group to conduct one of the most brilliant operations of the Civil War which went down in history as the Buguruslan-Ufa Operation. The Group delivered a mighty flank attack on Kolchak's troops who

were hurrying to reach the Volga, and smashed considerable forces of the White Guard.

The 25th Rifle Division distinguished itself especially in these battles. It was commanded by Vasili Chapayev, who came from a poor peasant family, and the division's commissar was Dmitri Furmanov, who later on became a well-known writer. Chapayev possessed a born gift of a commander, multiplied by extraordinary valor, a strong will, and selfless devotion to the Revolution. The command assigned him the most difficult combat missions.

In early June, the 25th Division under Chapayev was engaged in bitter fighting for Ufa. The daring attacks of the division threw the White Guard troops into panic. Trying to hold the town at any cost, the enemy officers made their men go into counterattack on pain of death. At one section they managed to gain a superiority in strength and push the Soviet troops back. At this phase in the engagement the front commander, Frunze, who enjoyed enormous prestige with the Red Army men, appeared with rifle in hand and led the regiments into the attack. The enemy was hurled back, and after a new decisive assault, the regiments of the 25th Division regained Ufa on June 9.

The garrison of Uralsk stoutly defended the town for two and a half months, standing off the onslaught of a much superior force of White Cossaks. The town dwellers were dying of hunger and diseases but did not surrender. In this connection, the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense adopted a special decision which stated:

"In a sustained struggle for the workers' and peasants' power, the valiant units of the 4th Army, surrounded on all sides by the enemy, endured the siege of the town of Uralsk for two months. Suffering hardships and exposing their lives to constant danger, the defenders of Uralsk exhibited an example of genuine devotion to the cause of the Revolution."

The 25th Division came to the aid of the besieged garrison. In a decisive attack, Chapayev's men defeated the White Guard troops and linked up with heroic defenders of the town.

In the northern direction, the units of the 5th Army under M. N. Tukhachevsky were successfully fighting the enemy. Reinforced with Communists, workers and poor

peasants, the army burned with revolutionary zeal.

A. P. Kuchkin, the commissar of the 27th Division assigned to the 5th Army, quotes an attack order in his reminiscences, which vividly reflects the spirit of that time: "Comrades Red Army men of the 27th Division! Rouse yourselves, exert your last efforts, and pounce on the panic-stricken enemy like lions... Chase them to the end of the world; do not let them come to a halt, do not give them a single day of respite. Another couple of mighty blows, and Kolchak's army will fall apart. Fooled that they have been, the White Guard troops will now begin to see clearly and go over to us in companies and battalions. So forward, comrades!"

Right from the outset of the Red regiments' successful attacks, a lot of men deserted Kolchak's army. The soldiers intentionally lagged behind their retreating units, stole away into forests, or hid in haystacks, and then came out to meet the advancing Red Army units.

As they successfully advanced along the entire Eastern Front, the units of the Red Army liberated Perm, Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk), Chelyabinsk, and continued chasing Kolchak's troops beyond the Urals. The objective Lenin had set—to liberate the Urals by winter—was realized. The men of the Eastern Front wrote the following letter to Lenin: "Dear Comrade Lenin, our tested and true leader. You ordered us to capture the Urals by winter, and we fulfilled your combat order. The Urals are ours. Now we are advancing into Siberia. This is not the first time we have to fight a battle with a superior enemy on your order, and every time we won, firm in the faith of the rightness of our struggle, in the triumph of the Revolution."

In the Urals and Siberia, numerous partisan detachments raised from the local population fought against Kolchak. They took his troops in the rear, destroyed railroads and communication lines, and blew up ammunition depots. The White Guard dealt brutally with the partisans, hanging, shooting and flogging them, and burning whole villages. But all these reprisals only intensified the people's resistance.

At the end of the summer of 1919, the Red Army units reached the Tobol River. At this objective, Kolchak redeployed his troops and tried to mount a counterattack and

encircle the 5th Army. But all his attempts were disrupted. In two months of bitter fighting, his army suffered a shattering defeat. After losing 30 percent of the troops, the enemy stampeded into a headlong retreat. On September 14 the Red Army entered Omsk, the capital of "the supreme ruler of Russia", as Kolchak had named himself. In January 1920, the remnants of his army were neutralized, and 60,000 troops, along with officers and generals, yielded themselves prisoner. Kolchak and his followers fled to the east in 5 trains. He was arrested in Irkutsk and shot by a verdict brought in by a military-revolutionary committee.

As a result of the victory over Kolchak, Soviet power gained a considerably firmer status. The Volga Region, the Urals and Siberia up to Lake Baikal were liberated from the White Guard troops and interventionists.

In the west, throughout the summer and autumn of 1919, the Red Army had to withstand the attack of the army under the White General Yudenich, which he tried to pull off on Petrograd from the Baltic provinces. The imperialists of the USA and Great Britain had supplied it with arms, food and equipment. A squadron of over 70 British naval vessels sailed into the Baltic Sea at a time when Petrograd was defended by the 17,000-strong 7th Army. The city was in grave danger.

The Party's Central Committee addressed the Party, people, and Red Army soldiers with the appeal to come to the defense of Petrograd. Reinforcements were sent to the city and new worker regiments were raised at the enterprises. Thousands of Communists, YCL members and workers joined the 7th Army. In a short time its strength swelled twofold.

The enemy pushed on to Petrograd relentlessly and captured Yamburg, Gatchina and Detskoye Selo, approaching Petrograd within several kilometers. *The Times* of London wrote that the fall of Petrograd was a matter of two or three days now. General Rodzyanko, when offered field glasses to have a look at the city, replied self-confidently: "What for? Tomorrow I'll be walking down Nevsky Prospekt." The White Guard, however, was not fated to take a walk down this, Petrograd's main thoroughfare.

On October 21, 1919, the Soviet troops opened the offensive. For three days a bitter battle raged at the walls

of Petrograd. Nothing could stop the thrust of the Red Army troops. Breaking the frenzied resistance of the White Guard, the Red Army threw them back from the city. The sailors of the Baltic Fleet put up a heroic fight. The Soviet destroyers, *Gavriil* and *Azard*, engaged 4 British destroyers and 3 submarines in the Gulf of Finland. *Gavriil* received over 20 shot holes, but continued fighting. The Baltic sailors sunk one submarine and forced the enemy ships to retreat.

Unrest started to crack Yudenich's troops. Along with the men, officers surrendered to the Soviet troops. In November Yudenich was completely routed.

The Soviet country and its Red Army had scored yet another victory over the combined forces of the internal counterrevolution and international imperialism.

The Defeat of Denikin

Peace had not been won yet. Lenin warned that the enemy had not been crushed and would again fall on the Soviet state. And that is exactly what happened. Taking advantage of the main forces of the Red Army being occupied fighting Kolchak in the east, the imperialists prepared for a new attack from the south. The ruling circles of Great Britain, the USA and France spared no funds to supply the 150,000-strong army of Denikin. Winston Churchill, an inveterate enemy of the Soviets, declared openly that the British government had supplied Denikin with 250,000 rifles, 200 artillery pieces and 30 tanks. Two thousand British officers served as advisors with Denikin's troops. The core of the army consisted of counterrevolutionary officers, sons of feudal landowners and capitalists, and wealthy Cossacks.

The enemy managed to achieve a numerical superiority over the Southern Front. Going over to a broad offensive, Denikin's troops occupied the Donets coal fields and a considerable part of the Ukraine in the summer of 1919. After fierce fighting, they captured Tsaritsyn. The further to the north the enemy pushed on, the bloodier the engagements became, with both sides sustaining heavy casualties. In October the enemy captured the town of Orel and approached Tula. Denikin had his "Moscow directive" distributed throughout the troops, by which Moscow, only

some 200 kilometers away, had to be taken by autumn.

In the regions the Denikin troops had captured, they established a reign of bloody dictatorship. Workers and anyone who had supported Soviet power were being shot and hanged. The land was returned to the feudal lords, and the factories to the capitalists. The working people were denied all political rights. These factors bred in the working people bitter hatred for the White Guard.

Grave danger hovered over the country again. To save Soviet power, extraordinary measures had to be taken. As always at the crucial hour when the future of the land was at stake, the Party appealed to the workers and peasants. In the Central Committee's letter "All Out for the Fight Against Denikin!", published on July 9, 1919, Lenin wrote: "This is one of the most critical, probably even the most critical moment for the socialist revolution... All the forces of the workers and peasants, all the forces of the Soviet Republic, must be harnessed to repulse Denikin's onslaught and to defeat him, without checking the Red Army's victorious advance into the Urals and Siberia... The Soviet Republic is besieged by the enemy. It must become *a single military camp*, not in word but in deed."¹

In response to the Party's appeal, tens of thousands of workers, Communists and YCL members joined the troops of the Southern Front.

The YCL organization of Kiev joined in a body the army in the field. Appeals in the streets of the besieged city said: "Every YCL member must report at the mobilization point!", "Everyone take up arms at this trying hour!" All able-bodied YCL members of the city responded to these appeals and left for the front line. The same was done by the Young Communists in many other cities.

In October 1919, a large-scale battle lasting four days was fought on the approaches to Orel. After losing over a half of its strength, Denikin's troops fell back in a hurried retreat. The Red Army passed over to the attack and liberated Orel on October 20. At the same time exceptionally bitter battles raged around Voronezh and Kastornaya, where S. M. Budyonny's Cavalry Corps acted jointly with the 8th Soviet Army. In this area the enemy advanced with

two corps. In a pre-emptive action, Denikin's troops struck at the 6th Cavalry Division on October 19. Checking the pressure of the enemy, the division went into a slow retreat, while the 4th Cavalry Division, after executing a turning maneuver, took the attacking enemy in the flank and rear. As a result, the Denikin troops suffered utter defeat in this largest cavalry engagement of the Civil War. On October 24 the enemy was dislodged from Voronezh, and the Soviet troops grasped the initiative on the Southern Front.

By decision of the RMC of the Republic, Budyonny's corps was reorganized into the 1st Cavalry Army.

The next city to be liberated after Orel and Voronezh was Kursk, followed by Kharkov, Kiev and the Donets coal fields. The Red Army pushed the Denikin troops ever farther into the south. After heavy fighting, the Red Army recaptured the large industrial center of Rostov-on-Don on January 10, 1920 and reached the Sea of Azov, capturing 11,000 prisoners and a sizable amount of the enemy's equipment.

Following the victory at Rostov-on-Don, the situation of the Soviet Republic changed radically. On January 20, 1920 the Entente powers decided to lift the economic blockade of the country.

The combat operations of the Red Army in the south were distinctive for their broad maneuver, employment of large cavalry forces in the main directions of the attacks, and determined action.

Covering hundreds of kilometers at a rapid pace, the Red cavalymen fell on the enemy all of a sudden. The commanders extensively used maneuver tactics and skilfully chose the direction of the main attacks—either in frontal or flank charges, or by penetrating the enemy's rear and dealing crushing blows to his second echelons and reserves.

Among the troops who distinguished themselves in the battles were the Red Cavalymen under the command of S. K. Timoshenko and O. I. Gorodovikov, the men of the Rifle Division commanded by the Petrograd worker and Communist P. A. Solodukhin, and many others. The cavalry detachment under the Serbian internationalist Oleko Dundić acted bravely and daringly in the battles for Voronezh. Dundić was wounded 24 times, but he did not leave the battlefield once.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 436, 437.

The combat operations on the Southern Front were conducted mainly along railroad lines and involved dozens of armored trains. They burst into the dispositions of the enemy, blasting his defenses, artillery positions and headquarters with withering fire.

One such train was commanded by Anatoli Zheleznyakov, a Baltic sailor who had taken an active part in the October armed uprising. His crew won the day in many an engagement. In one of the battles in the Left-Bank Ukraine, the train rushed into the station of Verkhovtsevo occupied by White Guard troops, and poured cannon and machine-gun fire into the enemy, inflicting heavy losses on him. Zheleznyakov was mortally wounded in this battle. Much as the White Guard troops tried to capture the train, their attempts were all beaten off. Breaking through the ring of the attacking enemy, the train safely reached friendly forces.

In the regions the White Guard had occupied, the working people put up a stiff resistance against the brutal regime of tyranny and violence. A guerrilla fight spread through the entire Ukraine, the Don area and North Caucasus. A large body of well organized partisans harassed the enemy in the rear. Workers of the Donbas attacked military units of the White Guard, disarmed them, and disrupted railroad traffic. Acting jointly with the troops of the Southern Front, the Donbas partisans liberated whole regions and cities, destroyed enemy headquarters and logistical units, derailed enemy trains carrying weapons and ammunition, took away from the bandits the cattle and foodstuffs they had plundered and returned them to the people.

The combat operations against Denikin's troops culminated in the defeat of their remnants in the North Caucasus in March 1920.

Success also attended the Red Army on the other fronts. In early 1920, the White Guard units under General Miller went down in defeat. The Soviet troops recaptured Arkhangel'sk and Murmansk. The Northern Front as such ceased to exist. By that time the Red Army had completed liberating the greater part of Siberia and Central Asia.

As Lenin noted, "During these two years Soviet power can be said to have accomplished what is nothing short of a miracle, for in the struggle against international capital we have succeeded in winning such an incredible, such an

amazing victory as the world has never known."¹

Yet the struggle against the White Guard and the interventionists had not ended. The threat of a new invasion still hung over the country.

The first few months of 1920 were comparatively peaceful for the Soviet Republic. After defeating the main forces of the White Guard and interventionists, the working people started to raise the war-ravaged economy. The international status of the country had improved. Peace treaties were signed with Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland. The Soviet government addressed all nations with a proposal to establish economic and diplomatic relations. But the big powers refused to recognize the Republic. Despite all their failures, they still nurtured hopes of liquidating Soviet power by military force. The interventionists continued to occupy the Far East. Within the country there were quite a few separate counterrevolutionary bands.

In the spring of 1920, the Entente powers organized a new combined campaign against the Soviet country. This time it involved the troops of bourgeois Poland and the army of Baron Wrangel who had marshaled the remnants of Denikin's troops. Poland and Wrangel, as Lenin noted, were two hands of international imperialism attempting to strangle the Soviet Republic.

The Entente powers equipped the Polish army with everything needed for the attack. The USA advanced Poland a 50 million dollar loan and supplied it with over 200 tanks and armored cars, 300 airplanes, 20,000 machine guns, a lot of other weapons and 3 million sets of uniforms. France also contributed large material and financial aid. French officers were enlisted to train the Polish troops, and the French General Staff developed a strategic plan of operations for the Polish army. The Entente powers aided Wrangel's troops in every possible way as well. Apart from fire arms and artillery, they sent a large amount of tanks, armored cars and airplanes. Military missions of the USA, Great Britain, France, Japan and Poland operated at Wrangel's headquarters.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the Fourth Conference of Gubernia Extraordinary Commissions, February 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1971, p. 169.

The Polish bourgeoisie and landowners intended to capture Byelorussia and the Ukraine and materialize their long-cherished great-power dream of creating a Poland stretching "from sea to sea". Incited by the imperialists of the West, the government of Poland rejected all Soviet peace proposals on establishing good-neighborly relations.

On April 25, 1920 the Polish troops put on a surprise attack. Enjoying a more than two-fold superiority in manpower and armaments on the Western Front and a four-fold superiority in the Ukraine, the Polish troops quickly advanced and captured Kiev and Minsk.

The Soviet Republic was again forced to mobilize its forces to check the interventionists and White Guard troops. Another mobilization was carried out, providing the army with some 1.5 million men. Over 24,000 Party members joined the units fighting the Polish interventionists. Formations from other directions were assigned to the Western and South-Western Fronts opposing the White Poles. In the second half of May 1920, the 1st Cavalry Army was moved from the North Caucasus to the South-Western Front commanded by A. I. Yegorov. The balance of forces changed in favor of the Soviets.

On June 5 the troops of the South-Western Front initiated the offensive. The 1st Cavalry Army, supported by adjoining armies, breached the deliberate defenses of the White Poles and gained a broad field of operations. It sliced the enemy's defense in two and demoralized it. The other armies of the South-Western Front also took the offensive, after which the troops of the Western Front (commander Tukhachevsky) delivered a mighty attack in the direction of the main effort. All attempts of the Polish command to check the advance of the Red Army failed. Within two months a large part of the Ukraine and Byelorussia was liberated, and the combat operations spilled over into the territory of Poland. By the middle of August the units of the Western Front approached the vicinity of Warsaw and created a real threat to it. But because of the utter fatigue of the troops and the lag of logistical support units which entailed irregular supply of the attacking troops, the offensive had to be broken off. Moreover, the advancing troops of the Western Front met with setbacks in the subsequent engagements. Still, Poland's losses were so consid-



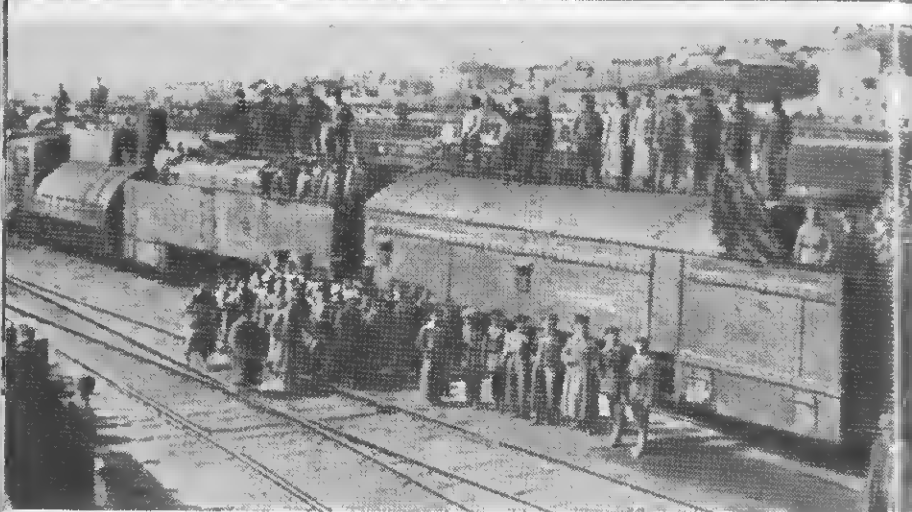
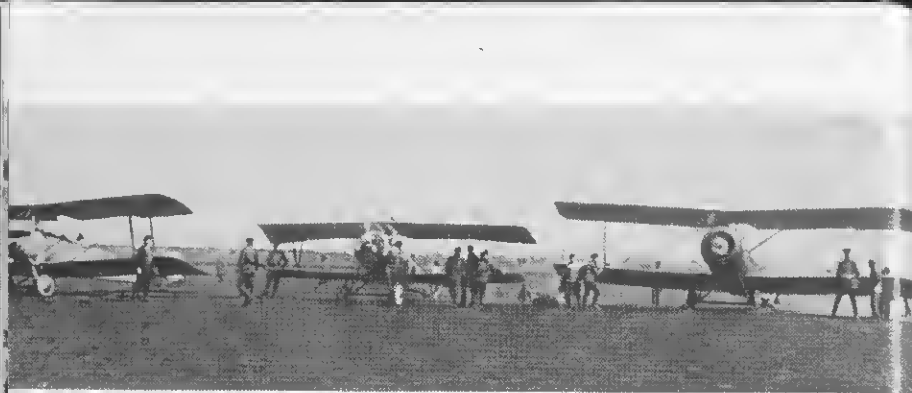
Lenin addresses troops training under the Universal Military Training Program



Units training under the Universal
Military Training Program marching
at a parade in Red Square in Moscow,
1918

Red Guards at shooting practice, 1917

A detachment of Petrograd
Communists departing for the front



Red Army aviation in 1918
Armored train *Chernomorets* at the
approaches to Tsaritsyn. 1918

The First Cavalry Regiment of the
1st Cavalry Corps of the Red Army.
Petrograd. 1918

Ships of the Baltic Fleet. 1918





Red Army units enter Yekaterinoslav
(now Dnepropetrovsk). 1919

Lenin and Kalinin with artillery
trainees. 1919

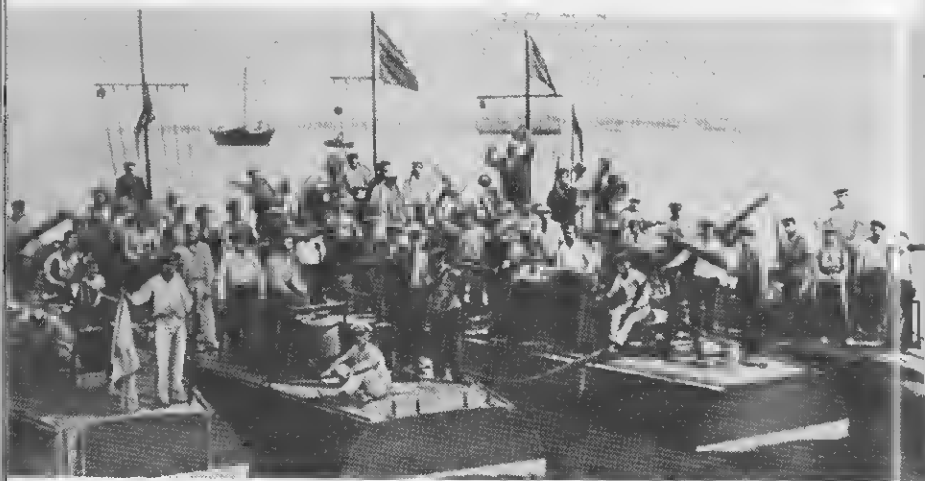
Military training of Petrograd workers.
1919



Semyon Budyonny, Mikhail Frunze
and Klim Voroshilov at the Southern
Front



Popular hero Vasili Chapayev,
commander of the 25th Rifle Division.
From a painting by P. Vasilyev
Machine-gun carts—a mobile weapon
of the Civil War



Armored boats of the Caspian Flotilla
A Far Eastern partisan detachment



A cavalry attack led by Semyon
Budyonny. From a painting by
M. Avilov

Captured interventionists' machine
guns. Far East, 1920



The first marshals of the Soviet Union.
Sitting: N.M. Tukhachevsky,
K.Y. Voroshilov, A.I. Yegorov.
Standing: S.M. Budyonny and
V.K. Blyukher. 1935

A Komsomol detachment in the town
of Nikolayev departing for the front.
The inscription on the banner reads:
"Down with Wrangel!". 1920

Men of the Far Eastern Army fighting
the Chinese militarists. 1929



Troop exercises. 1930

An infantry and tank attack.
Khalkhin-Gol, 1939
Participants in the fighting at Lake
Khasan, 1938





Seeing off the draftees of the Red
Army
Red Army men taking Military Oath.
1939

erable that it was forced to seek an armistice with Soviet Russia.

At the height of the war with Poland, Wrangel's 150,000-strong White Guard army launched an offensive from the Crimea.

In July 1920, Wrangel succeeded in capturing the south of the Ukraine and advanced to the Donets coal fields. He was set on advancing on Moscow. There appeared the danger of Wrangel's army reaching the rear of the Soviet troops fighting the Polish interventionists. The Party's Central Committee pointed out to the Party organizations the gravity of the situation in the south and took measures to reinforce the troops in this direction.

An attack by Red Army units moved from the Polish Front and by the newly activated 2nd Cavalry Army checked the enemy's offensive from the Crimea. Bitter fighting raged in the north Black Sea maritime regions throughout July and August, culminating in the capture of a bridgehead on the Dnieper's left bank at Kakhovka, which served as a base the offensive could be pursued from. The defenders of the bridgehead consolidated it and held it heroically, repelling the fierce assaults of the enemy infantry and tanks attempting to regain their lost positions. Eventually, the Kakhovka bridgehead was exploited to deliver a blow on Wrangel's troops in the Crimea.

To fight Wrangel more efficiently, the Soviet government created the Southern Front in September 1920. M. V. Frunze was appointed front commander.

Before departing for the south, Frunze was received by Lenin and instructed to defeat Wrangel by early winter. Budyonny's 1st Cavalry Army and other large reinforcements were sent to the Southern Front. The number of Communists in the troops had increased considerably. Lenin appealed to the Ukrainian peasants to exert all efforts and help the Red Army in defeating Wrangel. In response, the Ukrainian peasants joined the Red Army, helped it with food supplies, and intensified the struggle against the bands operating in the rear of the Southern Front.

In early October, Wrangel embarked on a new large offensive in order to break through into the Right-Bank Ukraine and link up with the Polish troops. His troops were routed in stubborn fighting on the plains of the Southern

Ukraine. But his main forces succeeded in slipping through into the Crimea and hid behind the fortifications on the Perekop Isthmus.

The White Guard command had started to build the defense works in the northern part of the Crimea a year before. French specialists were enlisted to take part in the development of the defenses.

The entrance to the Crimean Peninsula through the Perekop Isthmus seemed impregnable. An 11-kilometer long mound of earth called the Turkish Rampart, 8 meters high and 15 meters wide, ran across the isthmus. On this rampart strong fortifications were built, skirted by a moat up to 10 meters deep and over 20 meters wide. Two lines of trenches screened by barbed wire entanglement were installed on the approaches to the rampart.

A third line of trenches ran along the crest of the Turkish Rampart. The approaches were defended by hundreds of artillery pieces and machine guns. In the east, the Turkish Rampart jutted into the Sivash Bay, and in the west it was covered by the artillery of the enemy warships.

The command of the Southern Front decided to deliver the main attack across the shallow Sivash and cut into the enemy rear. On the night of November 8 the troops went into the attack by fording the ice-cold water, in some places chest-deep. As the frost grew more intense, the sodden uniforms turned into hard shells of ice. On detecting the attackers, the enemy raked them with withering fire. But despite the losses, the Red Army men relentlessly pushed on. It was only after three hours that the forward units reached the Crimean shore. Following a fierce assault on the enemy positions, they consolidated on the isthmus.

Simultaneously, other units mounted a frontal assault on the defenses of the Turkish Rampart. After a fierce and bloody fighting, they captured the rampart by night on November 9. For another 3 days a bloody battle was fought with the enemy who tried to regain his positions on the isthmus and check the assault on his rear defense lines.

On November 12 M. V. Frunze sent the following telegram to Lenin: "Herewith I testify to the highest valor the heroic infantry displayed during the assaults on Sivash and Perekop. The units advanced on the enemy's wire entanglements along narrow gaps under murderous fire. Our

losses are incredibly high. Some divisions have lost three-quarters of their manpower. The overall toll in killed and wounded is no less than 10,000. The armies of the front have fulfilled their duty before the Republic. The last nest of Russian counterrevolution has been destroyed, and the Crimea will again become Soviet territory."

After breaking out into the expanses of the Crimean steppe, the Red Army launched a headlong pursuit of the enemy. By the middle of November the entire Crimea was cleared of Wrangel's troops. The pathetic remainder of them with General Wrangel in the lead fled on British and French ships.

Speaking at the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets on December 22, 1920, Lenin said: "The complete, decisive and remarkably swift victory the Red Army gained over Wrangel is one of the most brilliant pages in its history. That was how the war forced on us by the whiteguards and the imperialists ended."¹

With the defeat of Wrangel, the Civil War had in the main ended. But for another 2 years the Red Army had to fight the remaining White Guard bands and expel the interventionists from Central Asia, Transcaucasia and the Far East.

Following the successive combat operations of the Red Army and the active struggle of the working people of Transcaucasia, Soviet power prevailed in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia throughout 1920 and early 1921.

In the Far East, the Japanese interventionists and White Guard still held sway. Japanese troops overran towns and villages, killed inhabitants, destroyed local Soviet government bodies, hunted down their leaders and dealt with them cruelly. The Japanese arrested Sergei Lazo, Vsevolod Sibirtsev and Alexei Lutsky, leaders of the Far Eastern Maritime RMC, and handed them over to White Guard. The three men were hanged alive in a locomotive firebox at the station of Muravyev-Amursky (now Sergei Lazo).

Soviet troops under V. K. Blyukher launched the struggle to liberate the Far East. They were reinforced with battle-seasoned formations. While advancing on Khabarovsk, the Red Army for 8 days fought bitter engagements

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, pp. 488-489.

for Volochayevka. Volochayevka was taken by a determined storm on February 12, 1922, and 2 days later the revolutionary troops, following the enemy in hot pursuit, entered Khabarovsk.

The interventionists were reluctant to give up that large areas of Russian land. The White Guard also resisted violently, making their last stand.

In October the Soviet troops captured the heavily fortified enemy positions at Spassk after a three-day attack. The remainder of the White Guard fled to Manchuria. The Japanese hastily embarked, and on October 25, 1922 Red Army units entered Vladivostok.

The protracted and incredibly difficult war against the combined efforts of the foreign interventionists and the White Guard counterrevolution ended in a victory for the first socialist state.

The Sources of the Red Army's Victories

The victory was of tremendous historic importance. The White Guard counterrevolution was routed and its plans of restoring the rule of capitalists and landowners were frustrated. A heavy military and political defeat was inflicted on world imperialism which had come to the aid of the internal counterrevolution and set itself the purpose of destroying the world's first socialist state. The new social system had won its first decisive battle against the forces of the old world.

The Soviet country achieved victory in an incredibly difficult and intense struggle attended by tremendous hardships. There were moments when not only foes but also friends of the Soviet Republic thought that only a miracle could save it and the Red Army would fail to overcome the enemy. On many occasions the Western press predicted the downfall of Soviet power. But in spite of all the predictions of Western experts, the Soviet country held out and won.

The main sources of the Red Army's victories are traced to the new social system the Revolution set up, a system based on the union of the working class and peasantry and on the friendship among the emancipated peoples. Soviet power demonstrated its vitality and potential for rallying

peoples and mobilizing tremendous human and material resources for defeating the enemy. It achieved an unprecedented unity of battlefield and home front effort, and under the extremely difficult conditions created a complex war-time economy which provided the front with manpower, armaments, ammunition, and food supplies. By 1920 a 5.5-million-strong army of a new type was raised out of the few Red Army detachments. It incorporated over 20 armies, or some 100 divisions.

The awareness of the just aims of the war was a vital source of the power of the people and of the Red Army. As Lenin said, "We overthrew the landowners and capitalists because the men of the Red Army, workers and peasants, knew they were fighting for their own vital interests."¹

In defending the socialist country, the working people upheld the gains of the October Revolution, the right to a new life, and the right to a happy future. The realization of the just nature of the war and its noble aims fortified the morale of the Red Army men, workers and peasants, lending them strength to bear unprecedented hardships and privations. Valor and mass heroism was displayed both by small detachments and large military formations. Two armies and 55 formations and units were awarded the highest decorations of the Soviet government for heroism displayed in action.

The decisive condition of the victories of the Soviet people was that all the matters of the country's defense were directed by the Communist Party. The Party inspired and organized the masses. Under the most difficult circumstances it achieved a truly historic feat by raising millions of working people for the selfless struggle against the foreign and internal enemies, by converting the country into a single military camp, and providing unity of political and military leadership.

Explaining the decisive role which the Party played in achieving victory in the war, Lenin noted: "It was only because of the Party's vigilance and its strict discipline, because the authority of the Party united all government

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Two Recorded Speeches", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 437.

departments and institutions, because the slogans issued by the Central Committee were adopted by tens, hundreds, thousands and finally millions of people as one man, because incredible sacrifices were made—it was only because of all this that the miracle which occurred was made possible. It was only because of all this that we were able to win in spite of the campaigns of the imperialists of the Entente and of the whole world having been repeated twice, thrice and even four times.”¹

Every time a critical situation developed on the fronts, the Party mobilized the communists who went to the most dangerous sectors, rallied and inspired the Red Army men, fought in the first ranks, and laid down their lives for victory. A half of the Party’s membership was at the front. Over 50,000 Communists gave their lives for Soviet power.

Lenin played an outstanding role in the organization of the country’s defense and the defeat of its enemies. He directed the tremendous effort of the Party and Soviet Government in creating and strengthening the Red Army and in conducting the struggle with the interventionists and the White Guard. His intellectual audacity and political and military foresight determined the strategic concept of all campaigns against the external and internal counterrevolution. He was Chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense.

In the course of the war, the Party brought to the fore talented commanders and political leaders from among Communists, workers and peasants, such as M. V. Frunze, K. Y. Voroshilov, S. M. Budyonny, V. K. Blyukher, V. I. Chapayev and others.

The Young Communist League rendered the Party and the Red Army great assistance in fighting the interventionists and the White Guard. Following the example of the Party’s Central Committee, the YCL launched several mobilizations of its members who were sent to the most threatening fronts and tense sectors of combat operations. Together with the Communists, YCL members carried on political work among the troops, explaining to the men

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 29-April 5, 1920. Report of the Central Committee, March 29”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 446.

the aims of the war and the combat missions and boosting their morale. In action, the Young Communists displayed personal examples of courage and combat initiative.

The Party raised the working people to fight in the enemies’ rear. Red partisans led by Party organizations were actively involved in the fighting in all the enemy-occupied territories. They delivered heavy attacks on the enemy troops and logistics, contributing to the victories of the Red Army.

Working people the world over sympathized with the just cause of the Soviet Republic, and wherever possible they aided and supported it and took up the revolutionary struggle themselves. In November 1918 democratic revolutions took place in Germany and Hungary. The German troops left Byelorussia and the Ukraine, and Soviet power was reestablished there. The spring of 1919 saw the emergence of the Hungarian, Bavarian and Slovak republics which waged a heroic struggle with international reaction for several months.

Over 250,000 foreigners who found themselves in Russia at that time joined the ranks of the Red Army. They formed international regiments and brigades in which fought Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Yugoslavs, Poles, Germans, Chinese, Koreans and representatives of other nations. Among them was the legendary Serbian Oleko Dundić, the famous Czech writer Jaroslav Hašek and the Hungarian revolutionary Béla Kun.

In the course of the war, revolutionary sentiments penetrated the interventionist troops. Foreign soldiers and sailors soon realized that they had been brought to Russia not to fight Germany as they had been told, but to topple Soviet power. So they refused to fight the Red troops. In the spring of 1919, the French regiments in Odessa demanded that they be sent back to their country. The sailors of the French fleet in the Black Sea rose in mutiny and hoisted red flags. Then they went ashore and took part in workers’ demonstrations in Sevastopol. On their demand, the fleet was made to sail back to France.

In the summer of 1919, the US command had to evacuate its expeditionary regiment from the north of Soviet Russia, since the men defied their commanders’ orders. British troops in Central Asia also refused to fight the Red

Army. Great Britain recalled its units from Turkestan and the northern regions of the Soviet country. In response to President Wilson's demand to have fresh troops sent to Russia, British Prime Minister Lloyd George replied that once the British soldiers would receive such an order, they would not only resist it, but simply refuse to obey orders.

Workers in many countries showed class solidarity with the working people of the Soviet Republic and protested against the intervention. "Hands Off Russia!" was the slogan under which protest strikes were held to stop the shipment of troops and weapons to the White Guard armies. In 1920, dockers in London did not let the ammunition intended for the Polish army be loaded on the ship *Jolly George*. Italian railroad workers went on strike to stop the movement of military freight to Russia. The intentions of the governments of Great Britain and France to aid Poland in the war against Russia were met by the workers of Western Europe with mass meetings and protest demonstrations. The fraternal solidarity and support of the workers of the world helped the young Soviet Republic to hold out in the struggle with its numerous enemies and achieve victory.

The victory of Soviet power in the Civil War explicitly confirmed the need of creating a mighty and highly organized military force of the Revolution—a regular, disciplined socialist army. The Red Army demonstrated its high moral, political and combat qualities, and its capability of fighting and defeating a strong enemy under the most complex circumstances.

In the course of the Civil War, there evolved a new, revolutionary art of warfare characterized by profound and comprehensive consideration of economic, political, moral and military factors, resoluteness, and mobility of action. The Red Army successfully employed various combat operations—offensive, counteroffensive, defense, guerrilla warfare, and concentration of forces in the main directions. And finally, a vast experience was accumulated in employing all combat arms—infantry, cavalry, artillery and aviation—in close cooperation.

On the battlefield the Red Army commanders demonstrated high political maturity and combat skill. They introduced a new, revolutionary spirit into the organization, preparation and conduct of operations by fronts and

armies; the operations were distinctive for their broad scope, bold concept, resoluteness and great mobility which ended in the defeat of the enemy (quite often superior in strength) and in a headlong pursuit of him. The tactics of the Red Army's formations and units were also remarkable for the determined and mobile nature of combat operations, extensive employment of turning and outflanking movements, taking the enemy in the rear and flank combined with frontal attacks, and the skilful use of reserves. High combat skill multiplied by mass heroism, initiative and selflessness of the fighting men ensured the Red Army's victory over the White Guard and interventionists.

The victory in the Civil War consolidated the international and internal situation of the Soviet state. There appeared an opportunity to channel the working people's efforts into peaceful labor to build socialism in the country.

The victory had a beneficial effect on the new upsurge of the revolutionary movement of the world proletariat, and inspired the oppressed nations to struggle for their liberation.

CHAPTER 2

YEARS OF PEACEFUL LABOR

*Restoration of the National Economy * Lenin's Plan of Building Socialism in Action * The Intensification of a Military Threat and the Strengthening of the Red Army * Lessons Taught to Japanese Imperialists at Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol * Consolidating the Soviet Western Borders * The Outbreak of the Second World War*

Back to Peace

The Civil War was over, and a period of long-awaited peace arrived. The country was faced with tremendous and complex tasks, for it had to restore the economy that had been utterly ruined by two wars, build practically a new modern industry, raise agriculture, and improve the material and cultural level of the people.

At the same time the country's defensive capacity had to be increased, because the Soviet state was surrounded by hostile capitalist powers. So while taking to the hammer and plow, it was still impossible to put aside the rifle. Speaking at the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1920, Lenin said: "Irrespective of the blows already struck at imperialism, we must keep our Red Army in a state of combat readiness at all costs, and increase its fighting efficiency."¹

With the economy in a state of disastrous breakdown, the country was in a formidably difficult situation. In 1920, the industrial output was one-seventh the prewar level. The railroad transportation system was ruined, and most of the plants and factories stood idle. Many of the ore and coal

mines were flooded. Agriculture had been heavily affected as well. The areas of plowland and harvest yields had dropped drastically. The grain harvested in 1920 was half the amount before the war. Besides, the drought of 1921 brought famine in its wake.

Foreign aid could not be counted on, for the imperialist quarters of the West, hoping the socialist state would not hold long and topple under the burden of famine and ruin, tried to double the difficulties by imposing an economic blockade.

The First Years of Peace

In this complex situation, the Communist Party led the people's efforts in restoring the economy and reorganizing it on socialist lines. In his writings, Lenin outlined the plan of socialist development. He showed that the working class of Russia could rouse the working masses to overcome the difficulties and build socialism under the leadership of the Party. The main thing, as he pointed out, was electrification and the development of heavy industry as the economic basis of socialism. This fundamental principle served as the point of departure in setting the task of creating a modern industry, reconstructing agriculture on socialist lines, and effecting social and cultural changes.

From the outset of the peaceful development the various nationalities inhabiting the country had to decide whether they should develop their economy, defense and culture as one entity or separately. This question was extensively discussed in the Soviets, at meetings, and in the Party organizations of the national republics. Everyone was inclined to unite, because only through combined efforts could the republics successfully build a new society, develop the socialist economy, and defend their independence against the aggressive attacks of the imperialists.

The creation of a single multinational state based on a voluntary union of equal and sovereign republics was recognized as the best form of association. In December 1922 the 1st All-Union Congress of Soviets convened at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. With a great deal of enthusiasm the delegates adopted the Declaration and the Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which, on the basis of accord and equality, brought together into one state four

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 489.

Soviet socialist republics—the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, the Transcaucasian Federation (consisting of the Georgian, Azerbaijan, and Armenian republics) and Byelorussia. Later on the Turkmen, Uzbek, Tajik, Kazakh and Kirghiz Soviet republics were created to enjoy a Union status as well. Today, the USSR comprises 15 Union Republics, the Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian and Moldavian among them.

In this way Soviet power united all the peoples inhabiting the territory of Russia into one mighty socialist state. The formation of the USSR was an event of historic importance. It consolidated the friendship and brotherhood of the country's nations, creating favorable conditions for the versatile development of all the Union republics' economy and culture and for the radical improvement of the working people's standards of living. The international standing of the country consolidated. Between 1922 and 1925 the USSR was recognized by over 20 nations, including Great Britain, Germany, Italy, France and Japan. The ruling circles of the USA were reluctant to recognize the Soviet state for a long time, and only in 1933 did the US government establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

The formation of the USSR was extraordinarily important for the country's defense. A single centralized body of military leadership was created—the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs. In August 1923 a decision was adopted to unite the top bodies of military command into a single Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR. This strengthened the centralized management of the country's defense as well as the development and strengthening of the Soviet Armed Forces.

From the first days of its existence the Soviet Union pursued a foreign policy which persistently advocated peace and cooperation among nations. Right after the end of the Civil War the Soviet Union put forth a number of proposals aimed at normalizing its relations with the capitalist nations. At the general European conference convened in Genoa, Italy, in 1922, the Soviet government introduced concrete proposals on economic cooperation; it also moved that universal arms reduction and a ban on chemical weapons and other inhuman means of warfare be discussed.

The imperialists did not want to cooperate with the Soviet Union on an equal footing; they tried to force crush-

ing terms on it, demanded the payment of czarist debts, the return of the nationalized enterprises to their foreign owners, and even the establishment of foreign control over Soviet finances and industry. The Soviet side flatly turned down these terms. As to the proposals on disarmament, introduced for the first time in the history of international relations, the imperialists refused even to discuss them.

At the same time, it was in those years that bourgeois propaganda put into circulation the lie about "Red militarism" and the "Soviet military threat" which has been aped and built up ever since every time the imperialists have had to justify their military preparations and rampant arms race.

Naturally enough, the Soviet government could not but take all this into account.

The Communist Party called on the Soviet people to be on guard, increase the country's defensive efficiency, and augment the Red Army's combat power.

The Soviet Armed Forces were being put on a peaceful status with due regard to the international and domestic situation, the available resources of the economy, and the necessity to maintain the country's defensive efficiency on an adequate level.

First of all, the armed forces were considerably reduced, mostly by demobilizing servicemen of the older age groups. Standing at 5.5 million by the end of the Civil War, the Red Army had been reduced to 562,000 by the end of 1924. After the reduction in its strength, its age composition improved very much, with servicemen of 22 and 23 years of age remaining in the ranks. The proportion of workers and Communists had also grown noticeably.

The main trends of the Army and Navy development at time of peace was formulated by the 10th Party Congress held in March 1921. In its decision on military matters, the Congress noted that the regular Red Army had to remain the basis of military organization in the Soviet state. It was stressed as necessary to increase the proportion of workers in the Army, reinforce it with Communists, and improve Party and political work among the troops. The Congress also emphasized the need to develop and reinforce the special mechanized elements and the Navy.

Military Reform

The reduction of the army's strength was only one trend in the large and complex effort of reorganizing the Soviet Armed Forces. The infantry and cavalry still remained its main fighting arms. Mechanized troops were few in number. The Navy was in a sad state: many of its ships were sunk, and a considerable part of them was taken out of the country by the interventionists and White Guard. The ships that remained needed repairs badly. The air force was also negligible in number and poorly equipped.

The experience of the First World War and the tendencies of the postwar developments in military affairs showed that a future war would be a war of engines and would involve large forces of tanks, aviation and artillery. The nation that could provide its army with the best armaments would have an important advantage. That was why overcoming technological backwardness was one of the indispensable conditions of increasing the combat might of the Soviet Armed Forces. At the same time it was necessary to perfect the entire system of military development in conformity with the conditions of peace and the prevailing international situation.

The extensive changes that occurred in the Red Army and Navy throughout 1924 and 1925 would be later referred to as military reform. Its elaboration and implementation was largely carried out by M. V. Frunze, then Chairman of the USSR Revolutionary Military Council and People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs.

One of the main measures of the reform was the introduction of a territorial training and cadre principle of manning the armed forces. This meant that a comparatively small cadre of permanent personnel was retained, while the military training of the majority of servicemen was conducted in the territorial forces by means of short-term courses and out-of-unit training. The regular forces, in which active service was uninterrupted during an established period ranging from 2 to 4 years depending on the combat arm, were comprised mostly of formations and units of the frontier military districts and mechanized and special troops. The territorial forces were made up of locally activated units. As a rule, these were infantry and cavalry

formations and units, 16 to 20 percent of which were composed of permanent personnel (command, logistical and others) while the rest were drafted from the surrounding villages and towns. Military training of the drafted (variable) personnel was conducted at annual camps (one to three months) in the course of 5 years.

In this way the reduction of the army's strength was combined with ensuring its sufficiently high fighting efficiency. The country had to temporarily adopt a mixed system of personnel enrollment which under the prevailing hardships was much more acceptable, since it required less expenditure. Thus, the maintenance of one Red Army soldier in a regular unit amounted to 267 rubles a year, while in the territorial units it was 58 rubles. The territorial mixed system justified itself at that time. The Soviet Union adopted it also because at this period the country was not threatened by an immediate attack. In the capitalist world the internal contradictions were aggravated, making the Western ruling circles center their attention mostly on these developments.

In the course of the reform, the central apparatus and the local command were reorganized, a yearly call-up was established, and the system of supply was reformed. As to training of the military cadre, the system of short-term courses was replaced by military schools with a period of training from 3 to 4 years. Six academies were inaugurated to train the high command personnel. The life and activities of the troops were fixed by new regulations and manuals reflecting the experience that had been gained during the First World War and the Civil War, and following from the precepts of Soviet military science. Military training of troops was conducted according to newly designed programs.

The Party was giving a lot of attention to consolidating the Party and political apparatus and improving ideological and educational work in the armed forces. The 13th Party Congress held in 1924 pointed to the need for expanded influence of the Party in the troops and the increase of the number of Communists among the men. The 14th Party Congress (1925) introduced into the Party Rules a special section "On the Party Organizations in the Red Army", which defined the specific status of army Party organiza-

tions: their guidance was to be effected by political workers and political bodies, and the activities of the Party organizations were to be framed by a special instruction approved by the Party's Central Committee.

A significantly essential part of the military reform was the decision on the gradual introduction of unity of command in the Red Army. Henceforth, a Party card-carrying commander was personally responsible for the fighting efficiency, combat readiness, political and moral state and discipline of the personnel under his command. Such a commander had an assistant responsible for political affairs. If a commander was not a Party member, a military commissar was attached to him as a temporary measure.

The military reform had been completed by 1929. As a result, the combat might of the army and navy increased substantially. But technologically, it still lagged considerably behind the armed forces of the more developed capitalist countries. The economic situation of the country and the level of development of the defense industry still made it impossible to adequately provide the Red Army with the latest military equipment.

The 14th Party Congress resolved to steer the country's efforts toward the quick development of the heavy and engineering industries in order to provide agriculture with machinery, convert the country from an agrarian into an industrialized nation, and ensure a modern technological basis for the armed forces.

The capitalist world tried to hinder the progress of the socialist state. It refused to give the USSR credits, resorted to economic and diplomatic pressure, and threatened with a new military intervention. Anti-Soviet forces organized a series of provocations against the USSR by raiding Soviet missions and establishments in Peking, London and other cities. The Soviet Ambassador Voikov was assassinated in Warsaw. In 1927 the government of Great Britain broke off diplomatic relations with the USSR. There were also armed provocations on the Soviet borders.

One of the biggest actions in the anti-Soviet campaign was the incident of 1929 when the Chinese militarists attacked the Chinese Eastern Railroad which then belonged to the Soviet Union and ran through the territory of Manchuria. They seized the railroad, arrested its Soviet administra-

tion, and disbanded the trade unions, simultaneously concentrating their troops on the Soviet border. All attempts of the Soviet government to solve the conflict peacefully were turned down by the Chinese militarists.

The Soviet state had to counter force by force. The Special Far Eastern Army formed for this purpose under the command of V. K. Blyukher and the Amur Flotilla incorporated in it routed the troops of the Chinese militarists. In these battles the Soviet forces demonstrated a high standard of training and morale. The whole world was made to see that the Red Army was vigilantly standing on the defense of its country's security and possessed enough power to deal the aggressor a shattering repulse.

The Continued Strengthening of the Country's Economic Might and Defense

In the history of the Soviet Union, the 1930s went down as a period when the socialist economy was reconstructed and industrialized, collective farming introduced, and an extensive program of cultural development launched. The USSR made great progress in an unprecedentedly short time which under a different socio-political system would have taken decades to accomplish. Only recently backward and poverty-ridden, with the majority of its population illiterate, the Soviet Union turned into an advanced industrial nation with a universal literacy.

During the years of the 1st Five-Year Plan (1928-1932), which was fulfilled ahead of schedule, a heavy industry with highly developed engineering was created in the country. 1,500 industrial enterprises, equipped with the latest machinery, were put into operation. The automobile, tractor, aviation, chemical and machine-tool industries were practically organized anew. The distribution of the industries throughout the country became much more extensive. The Urals and the Volga area became large industrial regions. A second coal and metallurgical base was built beyond the Urals, which was of great importance for the development of the country's economy and defense. Industrialization embraced the republics of Transcaucasia and Central Asia. The country strengthened its economic independence.

There appeared enterprises capable of producing industrial plant and modern military equipment for the Red Army.

In the course of socialist transformations it became possible to successfully solve such a tremendously difficult task as putting millions of small peasant farms on the lines of collective socialist farming. The collective farms could now engage in high productivity agriculture and animal husbandry by using modern equipment—tractors, combine harvesters and other agricultural machinery.

The successes of socialist development made for the elimination of unemployment in the Soviet Union once and for all.

The country's industrial development continued under the 2nd Five-Year Plan (1933-1937). In 1937 the gross output of heavy industry increased more than two-fold as compared with 1932, and eight-fold as compared with 1913. The completion of the socialist reconstruction of the entire national economy came as a result of the booming heavy industry, especially engineering. The collectivization of agriculture was also completed. In 1937 the country's farms had 456,000 tractors, 129,000 combine harvesters and 146,000 trucks. The Soviet Union became a power with a mighty industry and collectivized agriculture, with all the necessary equipment, armaments, raw materials and supplies of provisions for its economy and defense.

As a result of the victory of socialism, the class structure of Soviet society changed as well. It now consisted of two friendly classes, the workers and peasants, and the closely related intelligentsia. The friendship and fraternal cooperation among the country's socialist nations became much stronger, and a socio-political and ideological unity of the Soviet people took shape.

In December 1936, following a country-wide discussion, a new Constitution of the USSR was signed into force. It legally secured the victory of socialism in the land and reflected the Soviet Union's prevailing socialist production relations, the profound democracy of the Soviet system, and the equality of all Soviet people in running state affairs and every other aspect of political and public life.

The Constitution secured the social gains which had become established in real fact—the right of all Soviet citizens to work, to rest and leisure, education, social security, free-

dom of speech, of assembly, and of the press, the right to vote and be elected to bodies of Soviet power, and other rights and freedoms. At the same time the Constitution charged the citizens of the USSR with responsibilities—to strictly observe the laws of the Soviet state, maintain labor discipline, honestly perform their civic duty, and preserve and protect public socialist property. The Constitution declared the defense of the country a sacred duty of every citizen of the USSR.

Armed Forces Readjusted to a New Technological Foundation

The successes scored by the Soviet economy made it possible to build a munitions industry turning out tanks, aircraft and modern war ships. The armed forces underwent further improvement organizationally and structurally.

The main tactical formation of the land forces was a rifle division. It incorporated 3 rifle regiments, a tank battalion, 2 artillery regiments, one anti-tank and one anti-aircraft battalion. Its technical equipment and firepower had grown considerably. Whereas a rifle division of 1925 had 54 artillery pieces, 270 machine guns, and absolutely no tanks or anti-aircraft weapons, a division of 1935 numbered 57 tanks, 96 artillery pieces, 534 machine guns in the rifle elements, and 18 anti-aircraft machine guns. The efficiency of small arms and artillery armament considerably increased. And so did their output. As of January 1, 1934 the army had 17,000 artillery pieces, while by January 1, 1939 their number had increased to 55,790.

With the growth of the tank production capacity, the proportion of tank and mechanized troops increased in the army. By early 1936 there were 4 mechanized corps, 6 separate mechanized brigades, and a sizable number of separate tank and mechanized units organized in the army.

Big successes were scored in the development of aviation. New Soviet-built aircraft, including heavy bombers and fighters with a high maneuverability and powerful fire, were adopted for service in the air units. The technological level of Soviet aviation is confirmed by the fact that in 1937 alone, Soviet pilots established some 30 world records in speed, height and carrying capacity.

The Navy also underwent considerable qualitative and

quantitative changes. It had first-class cruisers, destroyers, and big, medium and small submarines. The building of small ships developed at a fast pace. From 1930 to 1939 the tonnage of the Navy increased by 130 percent. In 1932 the Pacific Fleet was created, and in 1933, the Northern Flotilla which in 1937 was reorganized into the Northern Fleet.

In terms of technology, the Soviet Armed Forces became adequately modern.

The growing war threat, the deployment of large-scale armies by the imperialist powers and the development of military technology made it necessary to improve the methods of military organization. The mixed territorial training and cadre system which existed before 1934 was replaced by a single regular-service principle of manning the Red Army.

The technological restructuring of the land and naval forces was combined with an extensive effort in training the command and political cadre. By the end of 1938 the Soviet Armed Forces had 14 military academies and 6 military departments at civil establishments of higher learning. From 1929 to 1937 they trained some 10,000 commanders with a higher and specialized education. There were also 75 military schools training officers in the lower bracket. A part of the commanders, including air pilots, tankmen and some other military specialists, had by that time gained combat experience while fighting as volunteers on the side of the Spanish Republic, against the Japanese militarists in China, and during the engagements on Lake Khasan and on the River Khalkhin-Gol.

The cultural revolution had an exceptionally marked effect on the quality of the replacements joining the armed forces.

During the first five-year periods all young conscripts in the army were literate. Many of them had technical skills they had acquired in the study groups of the Voluntary Defense Society (*Osoaviakhim*) operating at enterprises. This favored the successful mastering by the servicemen of the new combat equipment and their quicker progress in training.

The Party centered primary importance on the ideological and political education of Soviet servicemen. By that time an orderly system of political training had evolved

in the armed forces. The theoretical training of commanders was carried on according to a balanced system as well. In 1932 Marxist-Leninist theory was included in the regular training courses for commanders and political workers. Along with the art of warfare and military science, the program included theoretical aspects of Marxism-Leninism, Party history and policy and a study of the international situation.

During political classes the men and sergeants were introduced to the most important questions of policy of the Party and government, the goals of the Soviet Armed Forces, and the requirements of the oath of allegiance and army manuals.

Another form of education widely employed in the land and naval forces was political information, lectures, reports, questions-and-answers sessions and meetings with heroes of labor and of the Civil War.

The conditions for the cultural development of the men became more favorable. Service in the ranks gave the young people a better understanding of life and of ideological issues. Returning to their enterprises and farms, they actively joined in the mass political work, took the lead in work, becoming advanced workers.

The Duty of International Solidarity

From its inception, the Soviet country sided with the nations fighting for liberation, rendering active political and moral assistance to the working class of the capitalist world and to the liberation struggle of the peoples of colonies and dependent countries.

In 1921 the Soviet Union concluded agreements with Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey, rendering them considerable aid in their struggle for national liberation. That same year the Mongolian people, under the leadership of the People's Revolutionary Party and with the assistance of Soviet troops, expelled the local reactionaries and Russian White Guard troops, and formed a popular government. With the aid of the Soviet people, the Mongolian People's Republic embarked on the road of non-capitalist development.

The Soviet Union lent effective political and substantive military and economic support to the Chinese people

throughout their protracted struggle for national independence and freedom. During the first revolutionary war in China (1924-1927) a group of Soviet commanders under V. K. Blyukher was detached to aid the People's Revolutionary Army of China. The revolutionary forces of China were also supplied with armaments, food and medicines.

The Soviet Union was the only country to render the Chinese people substantive assistance and support in their liberation war against the Japanese aggressors. From 1937 to 1941 the USSR supplied China with a considerable number of airplanes, tanks, artillery, ammunition and fuel. Hundreds of Soviet pilots fought on China's side as volunteers and instructed Chinese pilots, and many of them died for the freedom of the Chinese people. Soviet advisors assigned to the army of China on the request of its government rendered great assistance to the Chinese troops.

The Soviet people's solidarity was vividly demonstrated during the civil war in Spain (1936-1939) when the Soviet Union resolutely sided with the Republicans who fought against the fascists for the freedom of the Spanish people. Some 3,000 Soviet volunteers—pilots, tankmen, artillerymen, sailors, military advisors and other specialists—fought courageously in the Republican army against the German-Italian fascist aggression and Franco's counterrevolution. R. Y. Malinovsky, K. A. Meretskov, N. G. Kuznetsov, N. N. Voronov, P. I. Batov and others who later on became famous military leaders were among the volunteer internationalists.

On the Eve of the Severe Trials

As a result of the transformations effected in the country's economy, in volume of industrial production the Soviet Union rated first in Europe and second in the world, next to the USA, by the end of the 2nd Five-Year Plan. The Party centered its efforts now on completing the building of the socialist society and ensuring the defense of its achievements.

In March 1939, the 18th Party Congress endorsed the 3rd Five-Year Plan of economic development. The plan envisaged the continued development of the material and techno-

logical basis of socialism, the strengthening of the collective farming system, and increasing the living and cultural standards of the people. An important place in the five-year program was assigned to measures for bolstering the country's defense. As the threat of war increased, it was decided to speed up the development of the defense industry and build up large reserves of fuel, electric power, metal and raw materials. Great importance was attached to the development of industry in the Urals, the Volga Region, Siberia and Central Asia, where new plants, electric power stations, blast- and open-hearth furnaces and mines were being built, while the old ones underwent modernization. Within three-and-a-half years of the 3rd Five-Year Plan, 2,900 plants, mines and other enterprises were built. The gross output of all industries in 1940 increased by 7.7 times as compared with 1913.

Aggravation of the International Situation

The peaceful development of socialism proceeded against the background of a complex international situation. The imperialists had already plunged into preparations for a new war. There appeared two hotbeds of war—in the Far East, where imperialist Japan had unleashed a war against China, and in the heart of Europe, where German fascism came to power in 1933, announced its idea of gaining world dominance, and started to arm itself intensively. In 1936, Germany and Japan signed the so-called "anti-Comintern pact", which was joined by Italy a year later. It was a bloc of aggressors, who under the guise of appeals for a "crusade" against communism, prepared for a new world war in order to redivide the world.

The Japanese imperialists pursued an openly aggressive policy in regard to the Soviet Union. After capturing vast territories of northern China, they approached the borders of the USSR and its friendly neighbor, the Mongolian People's Republic. The Japanese warlords hatched out plans of seizing the Soviet Far East.

In late July 1938, Japanese troops invaded Soviet territory in the vicinity of Lake Khasan, 130 kilometers southwest of Vladivostok. Sustaining substantial losses, they managed to capture the Zaoernaya and Bezymyannaya hills, intending to pursue the attack on Vladivostok. But

shortly after, the invaders were routed by Soviet regular units who came to the support of the border troops, and were thrown back beyond the state border.

The defeat at Khasan did not bring either Japan's rulers or military clique to reason. In May 1939 they launched a second, much larger aggression by attacking the Mongolian People's Republic in the vicinity of the River Khalkhin-Gol. In case of success, they intended to advance to the borders of the Soviet Union, cut the Soviet Far East off the country's central regions, and eventually capture it.

In compliance with the agreement on mutual assistance, the Soviet Union immediately responded to Mongolia's appeal and came to its aid.

At first the Japanese troops managed to advance deep into the Mongolian territory and cross the Khalkhin-Gol. In the engagement that followed at Bain-Tsagan in July 1939, both sides employed some 400 tanks and armored cars, over 300 artillery pieces and several hundred airplanes. The engagement ended in the enemy's defeat when the Soviet and Mongolian troops pressed the enemy grouping to the river and routed it.

However, the enemy started moving up large forces and preparing for a new attack. The fresh enemy troops arriving at Khalkhin-Gol linked up with the already deployed troops of the 6th Army which numbered 75,000 officers and men, 500 artillery pieces, 182 tanks and over 300 airplanes.

The Soviet command, for its part, concentrated large forces and started preparations for an offensive in order to encircle and destroy the enemy, for which purpose the 1st Army Group was formed under the command of Corps Commander G. K. Zhukov.

In the second half of August, the Soviet and Mongolian troops, following a powerful artillery preparation and air support, opened the attack. In the course of 3 days of pitched battles, the main forces of the Japanese 6th Army were encircled and smashed. The enemy tried to offset the failure on the ground by a revenge in the air. But the numerous dogfights invariably ended in favor of the Soviet pilots. For the first time, Soviet planes used rockets in air combat. Five I-16 fighters were armed with jet missiles which downed 13 Japanese planes.

The enemy lost 61,000 troops in killed, wounded and

captured, 660 airplanes and a large number of tanks and other military equipment. This forced the Japanese government to enter into talks and sign a cease-fire agreement.

The battle at Khalkhin-Gol was the largest confrontation of Soviet troops with a foreign invader since the Civil War. In it the Red Army demonstrated its high fighting efficiency. But the forces of imperialism did not take this as a serious warning. The threat of military invasion increased alarmingly because of the aggressive stance of Nazi Germany. Its rulers dreamed of conquering Europe and establishing their domination over the entire world. The capture of the Soviet Union occupied a principal place in these plans. "When we speak of new territories in Europe today," Hitler declared, "we must principally think of Russia and the border states subject to it. Fate itself indicates this path for us".

The ruling circles of the USA, Great Britain and other capitalist powers regarded German Nazism as the main striking force in the struggle with the Soviet Union, and placed big hopes on this force. They encouraged Nazism willingly, aided it in arming itself, and sought to push its aggressive aspirations eastward, against the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government took the deteriorating international situation thoroughly into account. While pursuing its policy of peace, the Soviet Union undertook energetic measures to check the aggressors by combined effort and to hinder them from unleashing a new war. It took the initiative in proposing a system of collective security in Europe. But the Western nations, while advocating peace in word, sabotaged the efforts of creating a system of European security in deed.

With the connivance and secret support by Britain, France and the USA, Nazi Germany armed itself openly, put its economy on a war footing, and demonstrated its aggressive intentions ever more bluntly.

In 1936, in violation of the Versailles Treaty, Germany moved its troops into the Rhineland, and then, step by step, started to expand its borders by conquering foreign territories. In March 1938, German troops occupied Austria, without meeting any outcry on the part of Britain and France. Soon these powers went even further in their policy of abetting the aggressor by signing with Hitler the Munich

Agreement, by which Nazi Germany, with the approval of the Western "peacemakers", seized the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, and in March 1939 completely occupied Czechoslovakia. Soon afterward the Nazis seized Klaipeda (Memelland) from Lithuania. The shadow of Nazi aggression hovered over Poland now.

As the threat of war increased inexorably, the Soviet Union continued calling on Britain, France and all peace-loving nations to unite their efforts in order to check the aggressors. Under the pressure of public opinion, the governments of Britain and France commenced talks with the Soviet Union in March 1939. The talks went on for 5 months and ended without any results, because Britain and France demanded of the USSR unilateral obligations and guarantees. They tried to make the Soviet Union pledge to come to the aid of any state subjected to Nazi aggression, while Britain and France would not be bound by any obligations. By such reasoning, the Soviet Union, in fulfilling its obligations, would be inevitably drawn into war, while Britain and France would be standing on the sidelines.

In the course of the talks conducted by the military missions of the three countries, the Soviet party put forth a concrete plan of combined action by British, French and Soviet armed forces to oppose Germany's aggression. In case the Nazis attacked Britain and France, the Soviet Union was prepared to place in the field over 130 infantry and cavalry divisions as well as a large number of artillery, tanks and warplanes. A powerful Soviet-Anglo-French coalition could have averted the war. But the reluctance of the ruling circles of Britain and France made this impossible. Moreover, as it was learned later on, the British government, simultaneously with the talks in Moscow, was conducting secret negotiations with Nazi Germany in London, trying to come to an agreement directed against the USSR.

For the Soviet Union the tense situation in Europe was compounded by the threat of attack from Japan which was confirmed, in particular, by the Khalkhin-Gol events.

In this way, the security of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1939 was threatened on two fronts—in the West and in the Far East, and in complete political isolation at that. Under such circumstances the Soviet government was forced to accept Germany's proposal on concluding a

non-aggression pact which was signed on August 23, 1939.

The Soviet Union took this step only after the provocative aims of the British and French governments were fully exposed, and all possibilities of concluding an effective agreement with them were exhausted.

In concluding the agreement with Germany, the Soviet government was fully aware that Hitler had not abandoned his plans of war against the USSR, and his proposal for the agreement was yet another maneuver of the Nazi clique. The agreement, however, deprived the imperialist powers of the possibility to expose the USSR to an attack by combined anti-Soviet forces, and enabled the Soviet country to obtain a much needed respite to bolster its defense.

The attempts of Western historians and propagandists to misrepresent the facts about this Soviet decision are made to conceal the treacherous nature of Britain's and France's policy in regard to the Soviet Union shortly before the war, and to deflect their blame in abetting fascism in its aggression. The US government at that time also refused to come to the aid of the victims of aggression.

The Soviet government's policy frustrated the schemes of the Western ruling cliques in organizing a single front of imperialist powers against the USSR.

The Nazis continued pursuing their course of aggression with impunity. On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany treacherously attacked Poland. With the aggressor transcending all limits, Britain and France, bound as they were by obligations to their ally Poland, declared war on Germany on September 3. Thus commenced the Second World War which was unprecedented in its scope. It drew into its orbit 61 nations, i.e., 80 percent of the world's population. The war lasted for 6 years, bringing the nations involved dire distress and horrible destruction.

Bourgeois Poland could not withstand the blow of the much superior German army. The Polish government left the people it had governed to the mercy of fate and fled from the country. Hitler's armies, overcoming the dogged resistance of separate Polish regular army units and detachments of volunteers, rapidly approached the eastern regions of Poland inhabited by Ukrainians and Byelorussians. The war was rolling right up to the borders of the Soviet Union.

Under these conditions the Soviet government had to take measures to save from Nazi enslavement the population of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, the territories seized by bourgeois Poland in 1920. By decision of the Soviet government, units of the Red Army crossed the state border on September 17, 1939 and took the population of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia under their protection. The people met the Soviet troops jubilantly. The Popular Legislative Assemblies of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia in October that year adopted decisions for reunification with the Ukraine and Byelorussia respectively and incorporation in the Soviet Union.

To ensure its security and further the common struggle against the Nazi aggression, the Soviet Union signed agreements on peace and mutual assistance with the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the autumn that year. By the agreements, the Soviet Union gained the right to place military garrisons and build naval and air bases in their territories. But the bourgeois governments sabotaged the fulfilment of the agreements they had signed and openly promoted cooperation with Germany. This caused the indignation of the masses. The working people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania overthrew the reactionary regimes and established popular power which addressed the Soviet government with a request to accept the republics into the USSR. In August 1940 the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian socialist republics, by the will of their people, joined the multinational family of the Soviet Union. The national troops of the Soviet Baltic republics became part of the Red Army, and their naval forces were incorporated into the Baltic Fleet of the Soviet Union.

In the summer of 1940, in accordance with the Soviet-Romanian agreement, Red Army troops entered Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. The population of these territories, freed from the oppression of the Romanian boyards, met their liberators with jubilation. Bessarabia, unlawfully seized by Romania during the Civil War, was reunited with Soviet Moldavia. Northern Bukovina, populated mostly by Ukrainians, became part of the Soviet Ukraine.

On the north-western borders of the Soviet Union the reactionary ruling circles of Finland pursued a hostile policy

in regard to the USSR. For a long time they were engaged in intensive military preparations by building powerful fortifications in the regions bordering on the Soviet Union, and semi-fascist military organizations were formed throughout the country in addition to its regular army, large as it was. An unbridled anti-Soviet campaign was carried on in Finland, calling for preparations for war against the Soviet Union. The rulers of Finland were willing to provide their territory to any nation ready to make war on the USSR. This was all the more dangerous, since the Soviet second largest city Leningrad was only an artillery shot away from the Finnish border.

The USSR government offered Finland an agreement on mutual assistance. But the offer was declined. Neither did Finland accept the proposal on an agreed change of borders in the vicinity adjoining Leningrad, although Finland was to gain a much larger territory in return for the Leningrad vicinity. Encouraged from abroad, the Finnish government not only refused to negotiate, but demonstratively increased its war preparations. In November 1939, it carried out a general mobilization, concentrating up to 15 divisions on the Karelian Isthmus and other regions near the Soviet border. The Finnish military provoked a number of border incidents, which led to hostilities on November 30, 1939.

The main military operations were conducted on the Karelian Isthmus where the enemy, with the assistance of French engineers, had built a zone of powerful fortifications called the Mannerheim Line. It consisted of several defense lines and numerous positions with permanent ferroconcrete weapon emplacements. In the course of heavy and protracted battles conducted during a rough winter on wooded terrain in deep snow, the Soviet troops breached the Mannerheim Line in February 1940 and took the town of Vyborg by storm, thereby opening the way into the depth of Finland. The Finnish government sued for peace. By the new agreement the border was moved 150 kilometers away from Leningrad, which improved the status of the Soviet Navy on the Baltic Sea as well. The Soviet Union did not impose any crushing terms on the defeated side, but only took care of the security of Leningrad and its north-western frontiers.

The Western politicians and strategists intended to use the Soviet-Finnish conflict to draw other countries into war against the USSR. The government and military circles of Britain and France were planning various diplomatic, economic and military actions against the USSR. It was planned to form and transfer to Finland a 150,000-strong Anglo-French expeditionary corps, and to prepare for an attack on the Soviet Union from Turkey and Iran. The plans were foiled by the quick settlement of the conflict.

In Europe, Nazi Germany was capturing one nation after another. In the first half of 1940, it captured Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, invaded France and defeated the expeditionary troops of Britain. The French government capitulated in June, and Germany occupied the greater part of France. In April 1941, Yugoslavia and Greece were overrun.

These successes bred then the myth of invincibility of the Nazi army. Hitler's propaganda machine spared no effort to spread the myth and intimidate the nations with Germany's military might.

The military defeat of the West European countries was occasioned by the fatal role the treacherous pro-fascist forces played within these countries as well as by the policies of the bourgeois governments who gave in to fascism, fearing that Left and revolutionary forces might come to power.

The policy of abetting German aggression resulted in most of the European nations finding themselves under the heel of the Nazi invaders. France and Britain, whose governments had hoped to turn the war against the USSR, themselves became victims of aggression. Many European nations paid dearly for the treachery of their bourgeois governments and the policies of the ruling circles of Britain, France and the USA who revived German militarism. Millions of people were killed or thrown into prisons and concentration camps. In the occupied countries the Nazis abolished any semblance of democracy and brutally violated law and human rights.

Nazi Germany plundered the countries it captured. It put their rich economic and military resources in the service of its military machine to speed up its war preparations against the Soviet Union.

Under the prevailing conditions the Soviet government

had to take every measure to strengthen the country's defense. Continuing its peaceful development, the country at the same time boosted military production, and the troops were provided with new equipment and armaments.

The entire nation prepared to check the Nazi aggression. In 1939 a new law on compulsory military service was adopted. It abolished all class restrictions on the call-up and stated that the defense of the country was an honorable and sacred duty of every Soviet citizen. All able-bodied men who had reached the age of 18 were subject to the draft. Between 1939 and June 1941, 125 new divisions were activated in the country. In June 1, 1941, the overall strength of the Soviet Armed Forces was over 5 million.

In the land and naval forces, training under imposed combat conditions was carried on intensively.

Big successes were achieved in new military equipment. The munitions industry started manufacturing new tanks, KV and T-34, which had no match in other armies as regards armor plating and maneuverability. The Red Army's artillery armament was also improved. New field, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns were developed. The 45 mm anti-tank gun which was adopted for service could penetrate the armor of any tank of those days. The first samples of multiple rocket launchers, eventually famous under the name of Katyusha, were built. The air force and the air defense units received the latest fighters I-16 and I-153, and mass production of more sophisticated fighters Yak-1 and Mig-3, the attack aircraft Il-2, the bomber Pe-2 and other warplanes was launched. The share of new classes of ships increased substantially in the navy. The overall tonnage of the fleet doubled during the 3 prewar years. New naval bases were being built at an accelerated rate.

At the same time a lot of work was being put into improving the organizational structure of the armed forces. Better organizational principles were introduced, and new formations and units were activated. A new combat arm, airborne troops, was created.

The Communist Party and the Government combined peaceful development with building a stronger army and navy and enhancing the country's defense potential. Yet, not everything that was needed could be achieved. The troops still had obsolete equipment in service, and there was

an acute shortage of new types of weapons.

Simultaneously with the modernization of the army, ideological and political education of the troops was intensified. It was aimed at fostering the understanding of the threat of imperialist invasion and the essence of the policy of the warring coalitions.

Civil defense instruction was carried on everywhere. Residents of town and country were introduced to the fundamentals of air defense. In many towns there were air clubs which, apart from training pilots, helped organize glider and parachute schools. Young men and women enthusiastically learned the flying skill, attended naval, parachute, glider, automobile and civil defense circles, and learned marksmanship and operation of military equipment. The *Osoaviakhim* Society, which at that time had a membership of 14 million, carried out a great deal of work in this direction. In the summer of 1941, some 2.6 million people were attending *Osoaviakhim* schools, groups and clubs. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies organized mass training of nurses and medical orderlies.

The organizational effort of the Communist Party and the work of the Soviet people provided for a rapid growth of the combat ability of the Soviet Armed Forces. In their combat qualities they were in no way inferior to the best armies of the capitalist world, while their morale was much superior.

CHAPTER 3

THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1941-1945

*The Attack of Nazi Germany on the USSR * The Country Rises to a Sacred War * Hitler's Plans of a Blitzkrieg Are Failed * The Turning Point * The Expulsion of the Invaders * Liberation of Central European Countries * The Defeat of the Vanguard of World Imperialism * The Factors of Victory*

Having established their domination over most of the West European nations, the Nazis turned their eyes to the east. In the latter half of 1940, Hitler's strategists developed a plan of war against the Soviet Union, codenamed *Barbarossa*. Its most important military and political objective was to destroy the Soviet Union in which the Nazis saw the main obstacle to their world domination. The underlying strategic idea of the plan was to be materialized through a *Blitzkrieg*, a "lightning war". According to the plan, a rapid summer campaign was to bring defeat to the Soviet Armed Forces in the western regions, without allowing them to retreat into the heartland, after which the West European part of the USSR along the Arkhangelsk-Volga line would be occupied. Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and the Donets coal fields were regarded as the most important strategic targets. Moscow was assigned a particular place in the *Barbarossa* scheme. Its capture was to have the decisive importance for victory in the war.

In accordance with the *Barbarossa* plan, 190 divisions (including 19 panzer and 14 motorized) of Germany and its allies were concentrated on the western borders of the Soviet Union. The invasion force comprised 5.5 million troops, some 4,300 panzer, over 47,000 field guns and mortars, and about 5,000 warplanes.

In the early hours of June 22, 1941, this huge force was

put into motion. Without a declaration of war, Germany attacked the Soviet Union in violation of the non-aggression pact. At 04. 00 hours swarms of German bombers dropped their freight on sleeping cities, railroad stations, airfields and military garrisons.

Tens of thousands of enemy guns and mortars opened fire on the border defenses, troop dispositions and frontier posts. Powerful striking forces of the enemy's land troops invaded the territory of the USSR along a large front extending from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathians.

Italy and Romania joined Germany in the war against the Soviet Union, and a few days later Hungary and Finland followed suit.

This was the beginning of such a giant and bitter struggle that history had never known, not simply an armed conflict of two armies or two nations, but an uncompromising class confrontation of two different social systems. The most aggressive striking forces of world imperialism moved against the first socialist state.

Fascism aimed to liquidate the Soviet state, destroy socialism as a social system, exterminate millions of Soviet people, subject the survivors to slavery, and turn the Soviet Union into a colony of Nazi Germany. Declared Hitler: "We are obliged to depopulate as part of our mission of preserving the German population. We shall have to develop a technique of depopulation... If I can send the flower of the German nation into the hell of war without the smallest pity for the spilling of precious German blood, then surely I have the right to remove millions of an inferior race that breeds like vermin."¹

These ideas were documented in the Plan Ost by which it was intended to colonize the Soviet Union, annihilate millions of Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and also Poles, Czechs and other nations of Eastern Europe, destroy schools and monuments of culture in the territory of the Soviet Union, destroy all intellectuals, build concentration camps and so forth along the same line.

This put in question the very survival of the Soviet state and its nations—either they were to be free and inde-

¹ *International Military Tribunal. Trial of the Major War Criminals*, Vol. VII, Nuremberg, 1947, p. 350.

pendent, or enslaved and subjected to physical extermination.

That is why in the Soviet Union the war came to be called the Great Patriotic War.

Fighting for a Just Cause

Once Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the pivotal point of the Second World War shifted to the East. The Soviet-German front became the main arena of hostilities. It was here that the future of both the Soviet people and other nations was being decided.

Right from the first day of the war the frontier military districts were reorganized into fronts which received orders to check and defeat the enemy. Mobilization was announced in the country, emergency situation was declared in a number of republics and regions, and measures were taken to put the economy and every other activity on a war footing.

The offensive of the Nazi armies unfolded on three strategic directions. Army Group North (29 divisions) advanced on Leningrad, Army Group Center (50 divisions) towards Minsk and Moscow, and Army Group South (57 divisions) towards Kiev. Simultaneously, attacks were delivered from the territories of Finland and Romania. The greatest number of mechanized and panzer troops were concentrated in the direction of Moscow. Each army group was supported by a large air force. Along the main directions of advance the aggressor enjoyed a three-fold and even five-fold superiority in manpower and equipment which, given the unexpected attack, put the Soviet frontier in an extremely difficult position.

Bitter fighting ensued along the entire course of the Soviet western frontier.

The Battles on the Border

The frontier posts and garrisons of fortified districts put up a stout defense, unwilling to retreat.

In the town of Sokal the frontier post of Lieutenant Alexei Lopatin, encircled, held the pressure of a much

superior enemy force for 11 days. Moving into the basement of a ruined building, the border guards continued to resist. They died as heroes, they did not retreat.

The battalion of border guards under Senior Lieutenant G.S. Polivoda supported by rifle elements counterattacked, recaptured the town of Przemyśl and held it for 5 days against the superior enemy, abandoning it only on orders from the formation command.

The defense of the Brest Fortress went down in history as a symbol of fortitude. Despite enemy superiority, massed air attacks and continuous bombardment, the defenders of the fortress turned down the enemy's offer to surrender. Well in the rear of the enemy lines, the soldiers and officers made their stand in the fortress for over a month. One of the walls in the fortress has preserved an inscription written by an unknown hand: "Dying, not surrendering. Farewell, my land! July 20, 1941."

The defenders of the large Latvian town of Liepāja on the Baltic Sea fought the superior Nazi infantry, panzer and air forces for 10 days in bloody battles. In the annals of the war this town has gone down as a fortress without fortifications, because devoid of any permanent works it contained the enemy like a real fortress.

The war in the air was savage. On the first day Soviet pilots made some 6,000 sorties and downed 200 planes. At dawn of June 22 fighter pilot Senior Lieutenant Ivan Ivanov, running out of ammunition in a dogfight, rammed an enemy bomber, cutting off its tail with the propeller. The entry in his service record reads: "Died while ramming a fascist plane at 04.25 hours on June 22, 1941." Another 8 Soviet pilots rammed enemy planes that same day.

On June 26, the crew of a bomber under the command of Captain Nikolai Gastello defied death north of Minsk. When the bomber had dealt with the target, a shell hit its fuel tank setting it on fire. After the vain attempts to knock off the flame, the crew preferred death to captivity. And death in a fight it was to the last second, for the commander directed the blazing bomber to dive at a concentration of enemy vehicles and fuel trucks.

Fighting enemy raids in the sky over Leningrad, pilot Pyotr Kharitonov twice rammed his adversaries during the first days of war. Stepan Zdorovtsev did the same.

Both reached base safely and continued fighting the enemy. These 2 pilots and their comrade-in-arms Mikhail Zhukov were the first to be honored with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union during that war.

The Nazis themselves had to record the tenacity of Soviet troops. General Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the Wehrmacht land forces, made the following entry in his war diary on June 24: "The stubborn resistance of individual Russian units is remarkable. Bunker crews have blown themselves up with their bunkers, rather than surrender... The Russians are not thinking of withdrawal, but are throwing in everything they have to stop the German invasion."¹ In his entry of June 29, he stressed that reports from the front confirmed that everywhere the Russians were fighting to the last man.

Soviet troops combined stout resistance with counterattacks. The powerful counterattack launched by the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front against the formations of the 1st Panzer Group in late June turned into a large-scale tank battle in the vicinity of Lutsk, Dubno, Rovno and Brody and slowed down the advance of the German main attack force in the Kiev direction.

But the conditions under which the Soviet Armed Forces had to enter the war were extremely difficult and the consequences of the first enemy blows heavy, and therefore the mass heroism and fortitude of the Soviet troops did not reverse the developments at the front at that early stage as yet.

Under the pressure of the superior enemy the units of the Red Army were retreating to the east. Encircled formations were fighting running battles to link up with the main forces. By mid-July the Red Army had to leave Latvia, Lithuania, part of Estonia, almost all of Byelorussia, Moldavia, and a considerable part of the Ukraine. The German troops had pushed ahead from 300 to 600 kilometers on the main lines of advance, reaching the far approaches to Leningrad and threatening Smolensk and Kiev. It was only in the north and in the area of Moldavia that their advance was insignificant.

But the Nazi leadership failed to materialize the much-

¹ Franz Halder, *Diary*, Vol. 6, Washington, 1950, p. 168.

hoped-for triumphant march into the heartland of the Soviet Union. The further the enemy advanced the dearer was the price he paid. The German troops had not known such losses before. By the enemy's count, the first three weeks of the war had taken a toll of 22,000 officers and men, over 1,200 combat planes and 1,800 tanks.

The Soviet troops also sustained heavy losses. Of the 170 divisions engaged at the outset of the hostilities, 28 were put out of action, and over 70 had only a half of their manpower and combat equipment left. As a result, the Nazi army gained even a greater advantage. For all that, Soviet resistance did not slacken.

Causes of the Initial Failures

The Soviet failures were attributable to a number of political, economic and military reasons.

Nazi Germany had been preparing for the aggression throughout many years. Its economy and the entire life of the country were subordinated to militaristic purposes. The economic and military potential of almost all of Western Europe, the huge reserves of strategic raw materials, metal, munitions industry and armaments, were all geared to materializing the aggressive plans. This made it possible to saturate the Nazi armies not only with highly mobile combat equipment but also with mechanized means of transport, which boosted their striking power and maneuverability. Besides, at the outset of the attack on the Soviet Union, the enemy army had been mobilized and manned completely and possessed experience in waging modern war. The Soviet Union, however, trying to avert war, had concentrated its efforts and resources on its program of peaceful development. Although reinforcing the defense potential was among the country's top priorities, not everything was possible to prepare for repulsing the aggression.

In his book *Reminiscences and Reflections*, Marshal Georgi Zhukov wrote: "History gave us too small a period of peace to get everything organized as it should be. We began many things correctly, and many other things we had had no time to complete... War caught the country

in the stage of reorganizing, re-equipping and retraining the armed forces, in the stage of building up the necessary mobilization stores and state reserves."¹ The modern equipment that had come into service had not yet been proficiently mastered.

The errors in estimating the probable time of the German attack also contributed to the failures, which explains the shortcomings in preparing for countering the first enemy attacks. The troops in the western military districts had not been ordered to be in condition No. 1, because of the apprehension that this might provide the Nazis with a pretext for a conflict which was hoped to be delayed by diplomatic talks. The deployment of the Red Army was carried out with the war already in progress, with the enemy delivering mass air raids on air fields, command posts, railroads and other important targets.

Another factor of no small importance was the Soviet Union having had to keep troops not only on its western frontiers but also in other areas of its vast land expanse. During the first months of the war over 50 divisions were stationed in the Far East, ready to oppose any possible aggression of the Japanese militarists who had concentrated an almost one million-strong army in Manchuria on the Soviet border. In the south, the frontiers had to be guarded against such possible adversaries as Turkey and Iran.

Despite the establishment of an anti-Hitler coalition of the big powers, the Soviet Union was still left to its own resources in the fierce battle with German fascism in Europe. All this had a negative effect on the outcome of the border engagements in the early phase of the war. But the failures on the battlefield did not blunt the will of the Soviet people to fight. The resistance of the Soviet Army was mounting. The enemy advance slowed down, and on a number of sectors in the Baltic regions and on the Leningrad and Kiev directions it was stemmed. Thus were frustrated the Nazi attempts to penetrate the most important political centers and economic regions of the USSR at one fell swoop.

¹ Marshal of the Soviet Union G. Zhukov, *Reminiscences and Reflections*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1985, p. 271.

The Nazi Blitzkrieg Frustrated

Mobilization of Forces to Repulse the Enemy

From the first hours of the war the Party and the Government initiated titanic activities on mobilizing all human and material resources to counter the aggression. At midday of June 22 an Appeal to the People was read over the radio, calling on all citizens to enforce discipline, orderliness and selflessness to defeat the enemy. The appeal expressed a firm conviction that the aggressor would fail. It ended with what would become a symbolic motto: "The enemy will be defeated. The victory will be ours." That day mobilization of everyone liable for call-up was announced.

Draftees from town and country flocked to the induction stations. Young boys and old men requested to be sent to the front line. On the initiative of Moscow and Leningrad, the activation of volunteer detachments and, later on, of entire volunteer formations was launched.

The Directive of the Soviet Government and the Party's Central Committee to the Party and Local Government Bodies of the Border Regions of June 29, 1941 presented a comprehensive program of transforming the country into a single war camp. The directive stressed the acute danger looming over the land and explained the just nature of the war of liberation the Soviet people were to wage against the invaders. The principal idea of this document was embodied in the slogan: "Everything for the Front! Everything for Victory!"

The directive dwelled on the necessity to reorganize the national economy on a war footing, increase the output of the munitions industry to the highest level possible, raise the efficiency of the armed forces, and render all assistance to the army in the field. The Central Committee and the Government called for a merciless struggle with the enemy on the battlefield and for an all-out partisan war against the invaders in the territories they had occupied. All Soviet people had to maintain the strictest discipline, organization, cohesion and selflessness in contributing all their effort to victory.

The program which the Central Committee and the Government had worked out was expounded and developed

in Stalin's address to the nation read over the radio in July 3, 1941. In it he stated that the war was not only between two armed forces. It was at the same time a great patriotic war of all the Soviet people against fascist invaders. Its purpose was not only to eliminate the danger looming over the Soviet Union, but also to assist all the nations of Europe in liberating themselves from fascism. The message expressed confidence that the war for the Soviet Union's freedom would merge with the struggle of the nations of Europe and America for their independence, and reaffirmed the conviction in the inevitable victory over the enemy.

In order to implement the program, centralize management of the country and provide for a single leadership of the home and battle fronts, a State Defense Committee, an emergency body that assumed total power, was established on June 30. It was headed by the General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee Joseph Stalin. In August 1941 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

During those trying days the main efforts of the Party and the people were concentrated on reinforcing the Red Army, providing it with replacements, weapons and food supplies. In a short time, 5.3 million men were called up for military service, including 650,000 reserve officers. Some 265,000 trucks and tractors were taken from the country's motor pool and sent to the front lines. About 2 million men joined the volunteer units.

All the branches of the national economy, above all industry and transport, were put on a war footing at an accelerated pace. The output of the existing munitions factories was boosted and new enterprises were built, while many civilian plants switched over to war production. From the western regions threatened with Nazi occupation some 2,600 enterprises were evacuated into the heartland, of which number 1,523 were large enterprises including those producing tanks, aircraft, machines, armaments and ammunition. Over 10 million people were also evacuated to the eastern regions.

The equipment of the evacuated enterprises was frequently installed and operated right in the open, and the walls and roofs built subsequently. In a matter of months,

weeks and at times days these enterprises launched production for the front. The country's largest aircraft factory in the Volga Region manufactured its first fighter planes 14 days after the arrival of the last trainload of equipment. Its shops had not yet been covered by roofs when the machine tools were already in operation. The enterprises that had been built in the east before the war were rapidly increasing output. A year after the outbreak of the war three-quarters of the Soviet Union's military hardware was produced in the eastern regions.

The initial effort yielded substantial results. During the latter half of 1941 the country's munitions factories produced over 1.5 million rifles and carbines, 196,000 machine guns, 72,500 artillery pieces, 4,740 tanks including over 2,800 latest KV and T-34 tanks, 8,000 combat planes, over half of which were of the latest types, and over 40 million artillery and mortar shells. This was twice as much as the average for the first 6 months of that year, and as regards machine guns 8 times as much.

The farmers contributed to the war effort as effectively as the industrial workers. Although almost all the adult population of the villages had joined the armed forces, and a considerable part of the farms' tractors, trucks and draught animals had been transferred to the army, agriculture continued supplying the front with food and the industries with raw materials. The men who had left for war were replaced by women, old men and young teenagers.

In response to the Party's appeal, a mass partisan movement was launched in the enemy-occupied territories. At the end of 1941 over 2,000 detachments, a considerable number of combat groups and underground organizations were fighting the enemy.

Right from the beginning of the war the Communist Party detached its best members to the armed forces and defense industries. Many secretaries of Party central committees of the Union republics, of territorial, regional, city and district Party committees, and functionaries of the Central Committee and regional and district Party committees were sent to serve in the armed forces. During the first 6 months of the war 100,000 Communists and YCL members were detached to the front as political workers in the units.

As a result of the mobilization carried out in the first 6 months, over 1,100,000 Communists joined the ranks of the fighting force; at the end of 1941 the land and naval troops numbered 1.3 million Communists, i.e., nearly half of the Party membership. The political bodies in the troops were strengthened and the institute of military commissars was revived, to last till October 1942.

The Battles of the Summer and Autumn of 1941

The results the enemy had gained during the border engagements and his rapid advance to the east made the leadership of Nazi Germany believe that the war against the Soviet Union had been won. "The objective to shatter the bulk of the Russian Army this side of the Dvina and Dnieper, has been accomplished... It is thus probably no overstatement to say that the Russian campaign has been won in the space of two weeks."¹ That was how General Halder assessed the situation. During a conference at his general headquarters Hitler maintained that in the immediate future the struggle against the Red Army would move into a phase of "economic suppression" of the Soviet Union. Proceeding from this assumption, the Nazi command decided to pursue the offensive on all strategic directions.

The course of events soon shattered these conclusions. The resistance of the Soviet troops in a number of important directions was growing ever stiffer. By the middle of July the Nazi troops had to deal with an almost continuous front of resistance. The Soviet GHQ quickly increased the depth of the defenses by deploying reserve armies along the rear defense lines. On the central direction where the German Army Group Center was engaged, troops of the reserve front were deployed in the rear of the Western Front, and on the far approaches to Moscow the Mozhaisk defense line was built. Defense lines were also built in the rear of the active fronts in the other directions.

The largest battle in the summer of 1941 raged in the central direction around the city of Smolensk. To launch the offensive on Smolensk and further on Moscow, the German command engaged a tremendous mass of troops of

¹ Franz Halder, *Diary*, Vol. 6, p. 196.

Army Group Center and part of Army Group North—in all, 62 divisions and 2 brigades. Enjoying a two-fold superiority in manpower, artillery and aircraft and an almost four-fold superiority in tanks, the Nazi troops, on July 10, took to the offensive in the direction of Smolensk and Velikiye Luki so as to punch holes in the Soviet defense, encircle and wipe out the main forces of the Western Front, and thereby open the way for an unhindered advance on Moscow.

The battle of Smolensk lasted for 2 months and was waged over a large area up to 650 kilometers wide and 250 kilometers deep. At its various phases it involved the troops of 4 Soviet fronts. In the course of bitter defensive and offensive action, they inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and considerably sapped the combat power of Army Group Center in which by the end of the battle its panzer and mechanized divisions had lost half of their personnel.

At the closing phase of the battle of Smolensk Soviet troops executed an offensive operation in the vicinity of the town of Yelnya, defeated 2 panzer, 1 mechanized and 7 infantry divisions of the enemy and liquidated the Yelnya salient. This was one of the first offensive operations by the Red Army in that war, in which a large enemy grouping was encircled and smashed.

The battles at Smolensk and other sectors of the central zone of hostilities gave birth to the Soviet Guards. The order of the USSR People's Commissar for Defense of September 18, 1941 read: "In numerous battles for our Soviet country against the Hitler hordes of fascist Germany, the 100th, 127th, 153rd, and 161st infantry divisions set examples of courage, valor and organization. Under difficult conditions these divisions repeatedly defeated the German fascist troops, putting them to flight and striking horror into them... For the feat of arms, organization, discipline and exemplary order the aforesaid divisions are renamed Guards divisions... In accordance with the decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the divisions are to be issued special Guards colors."

A new mighty weapon, the multiple rocket launcher the soldiers nicknamed Katyusha, went through the baptism of fire in the engagements on the approaches to Smolensk.

The first battery of rocket launchers under the command of Captain Ivan Flyorov made its first attack on enemy trainloads of combat equipment at the Orsha railroad junction on July 14, 1941. The entry in the battery log reads: "Results excellent. A solid body of fire." An hour and a half later the battery fired a volley on the enemy troops crossing the River Orshitsa. The enemy sustained heavy losses in manpower and equipment. In the course of the war this weapon was extensively used by the Soviet Armed Forces.

Although the Nazi troops succeeded in advancing from 170 to 200 kilometers inland and capture Smolensk, their offensive combat power was seriously weakened and the plans for an uninterrupted advance on Moscow were frustrated. The German command was forced to issue a directive for Army Group Center to assume the defensive in this direction. This made it possible for the Soviet command to effect important measures on strengthening the defense of Moscow. Thus the battle of Smolensk, along with other engagements, marked the beginning of failure of the Blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union.

The country highly appreciated the outstanding feat of arms of the defenders of the ancient city of Smolensk. During the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of victory over fascism in 1985 the honorary title of Hero City was conferred on Smolensk.

Soviet troops also offered strong resistance to Army Group North pushing on to Leningrad through the Baltic regions. The heroic action of the land forces and the Baltic Fleet defending Tallinn, Moonsund Islands and the Hanko Peninsula forced the enemy to divert large forces intended for the attack on Leningrad, which in the end affected the pace of his advance and the outcome of the engagements on the immediate approaches to the city.

The advance of the German troops on Leningrad was delayed by about a month on the Luga defense lines and at Novgorod. Despite Hitler's insistent demand, they could resume the offensive only after reinforcements were rushed in. In early September, the Nazi troops broke through to the immediate environs of Leningrad and Lake Ladoga and blockaded the city on its land approaches. Throughout the whole of September the enemy repeatedly tried to take

the city by storm. But the troops of the Leningrad Front, the sailors of the Baltic Fleet and the volunteer divisions kept beating off the attackers. One of the principal objectives of the Barbarossa plan, the capture of Leningrad, was thus frustrated. So the enemy laid siege to the city, deciding to crush the resistance of its defenders by hunger, ceaseless bombardment and air raids. The siege of Leningrad was an epic of human courage and endurance that lasted for 900 days.

Leningrad became a frontline city in the true sense of the word, its forward line of defense running through the suburbs. Barbaric bombardments were delivered in combination with air raids which killed people and destroyed houses and unique creations of architecture. Within one day of September 19 some 2,000 high explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped and up to 100 heavy shells were lobbed on the city. Air raid warnings were sounded several times a day. And so it went on for 900 days during which time the Nazis showered the city with over 100,000 high explosive and incendiary bombs and some 150,000 artillery shells, destroying more than 3,000 and damaging 7,000 buildings. On the walls of the houses on Nevsky Prospekt and other streets inscriptions are still retained: "Citizens! During bombardment this side of the street is the most dangerous."

The Leningraders existed practically on skeleton rations. The blockade was particularly severe in the winter of 1941-1942. There was no fuel, electric power, the sewerage system stopped to function. Rations were cut 5 times, and throughout November and December workers received only 250 grams of bread a day, the rest of the residents got 125 grams, while the distribution of other food was stopped altogether. Malnutrition led to a catastrophic increase in deaths. During the blockade over 640,000 Leningraders died of hunger.

Under these incredibly harsh conditions the city continued to work and fight. The workers did not leave their machine tools for days on end turning out weapons and ammunition. Throughout 1941-1944 the Leningraders built and repaired 2,000 tanks, 1,500 airplanes, thousands of naval and field guns, many naval ships, manufactured 225,000 submachine guns, 12,000 mortars, and some

10 million artillery and mortar shells. Detachments and teams of the local air defense, in which tens of thousands of the citizens were involved, extinguished fires, dealt with the consequences of the bombardments and air raids and maintained order in the city.

The men in the field fought the enemy staunchly and selflessly. The repeated attempts of the enemy to breach the Soviet defenses and capture the city were met with a heroic resistance of the besieged.

The entire country, strained as the situation on the other fronts was at that time, helped the defenders and residents of Leningrad. Supplies were delivered by air and along the only line of communication, called the Road of Life, running across ice-bound Lake Ladoga; at other times of the year the supplies came by ship. The convoys were subjected to ruthless enemy fire. In 514 days the besieged city was thus supplied with over 1.4 million tons of food and ammunition, and over one million children, old men, women and wounded soldiers were evacuated to the mainland.

But only a reliable communication line on land could make it possible to supply the big city with everything it needed to live and resist. In January 1943 an operation was undertaken to run the blockade of Leningrad. The troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov Fronts (commanded by Generals L.A. Govorov and K.A. Meretskov), jointly with the sailors of the Baltic Fleet, delivered along the southern shore of Lake Ladoga an encounter attack on the enemy grouping which relied on a well developed network of powerful defenses. In the face of stubborn resistance, the Soviet troops punched an 8- to 11-kilometer wide corridor in the enemy's defenses, and although it was exposed to enemy fire, the attackers built a railroad through the corridor. The blockade of Leningrad was partially broken, and the situation in the city improved considerably.

Still, the enemy remained standing at the walls of Leningrad. On the near and far approaches to the city the Nazis kept 750,000 troops with 10,000 artillery pieces, many hundreds of tanks and airplanes. Bombardments and air raids continued as before. The blockade was lifted in January 1944 when the troops of the Leningrad and Vol-

khov Fronts and the 2nd Baltic Front routed Army Group North and hurled the enemy back far to the west. In recognition of the incomparable feat of the defenders and residents of Leningrad, it was awarded the title of Hero City. Some 1.5 million participants in the defense were awarded the Medal For the Defense of Leningrad.

The situation on the Kiev direction in the summer of 1941 was complex and difficult for the Red Army. Having achieved a two-fold and on a number of sectors a still much bigger superiority in manpower and materiel against the troops of the South-Western Front, the Nazis broke through to the approaches of the capital of the Ukraine Kiev in the middle of July. The troops of the Kiev Fortified Area, along with a number of rifle divisions and volunteer units, contained the enemy at the walls of the city.

The heroic defense of Kiev ensued. In response to the appeal of Ukrainian Party organization and the Government, 200,000 residents of Kiev joined the Red Army. Some 90,000 formed volunteer units. The newly activated 37th Army took up the brunt of the fighting for the city. The other formations of the South-Western Front delivered flank attacks on the enemy. The defenders of Kiev fought courageously for more than 70 days, containing over 20 enemy divisions at its walls, and forced the enemy to remove substantial forces from Army Group Center in this direction so as to deliver a flank attack on the South-Western Front. Only with the imminent threat of encirclement did the troops defending Kiev leave the city on orders of the Soviet command on September 17.

But a considerable part of the troops of the South-Western Front failed to evade encirclement. Sustaining heavy losses, they fought their way through to the east. Due to their persistence and powerful counterattacks, they had managed to bleed over 10 enemy divisions in the engagements for Kiev alone. The enemy's losses amounted to over 100,000 officers and men. The advance of the German troops on Moscow had to be suspended for two months, because large forces had to be diverted from Moscow and moved to Kiev and the Soviet troops at Smolensk were offering an ever stiffer resistance.

The heroic defense of Odessa, a large Black Sea port

and an important naval base, continued for over 2 months. The enemy hurled into the attack a force that had a five-fold superiority in manpower, hoping to capture the city from march columns. Taking into account the importance of holding the city that was now deep in the enemy's rear, and also the opportunity of delaying considerable enemy forces in this area, the Soviet command ordered the Separate Maritime Army and the Black Sea Fleet to defend Odessa with all available resources.

For 70 days the Soviet troops beat off the attacks of the enemy. The units of the Odessa Defense Area under the command of Admiral G.V. Zhukov put up a heroic stand as did the famous Chapayev Division under General I.Y. Petrov who commanded the Separate Maritime Army soon afterward. The other units and formations fighting heroically for the city not only held their positions doggedly, but also mounted bold counterattacks, throwing back and inflicting serious losses on the enemy. In one such engagement, a combined attack by a landing force of marines, a unit of paratroopers dropped behind enemy lines and rifle troops sent from the front, 2 enemy divisions were routed and thrown from 5 to 8 kilometers back.

The enemy succeeded in entering Odessa only on September 16, when the Soviet command ordered the city's defenders to evacuate by sea to the Crimea where the main Black Sea base Sevastopol was under serious threat of capture.

The heroic defense of Sevastopol began on October 30. The 11th German Army breaking into the Crimea made an attempt to capture the city from march columns. But the attempt was frustrated by the Sevastopol garrison with the support of naval artillery and aircraft. The Nazi command pulled up additional forces and staged two major offensives on the city in November and December 1941. But they, too, were repelled with heavy losses for the enemy.

The troops of the Sevastopol Defense Area under Vice Admiral F.S. Oktyabrsky fought with exceptional courage, defying death. Political officer Nikolai Filchenkov and 4 of his comrades-in-arms, only with submachine guns, grenades and incendiary bottles, engaged 15 Nazi panzer in an unequal fight on November 7. At the height of the fighting,

two sailors, Krasnoselsky and Tsybulko, were killed, the rest were running out of ammunition, so Nikolai Filchenkov tied the remaining grenades round his belt and threw himself under an enemy tank. The sailors Daniil Odintsov and Yuri Parshin followed the example of their commander and stopped the enemy at the price of their lives. All 5 sailors were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union posthumously.

Among the courageous defenders of Sevastopol were quite a few women—machine gunner Nina Onilova, sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko, and scout Maria Baida, to name but a few.

In 1942 the Nazi command prepared for a new storm of Sevastopol. By early July the enemy had concentrated at the city over 200,000 troops, 450 tanks, 600 warplanes and over 2,000 guns and mortars, including heavy and superheavy artillery pieces (420 mm and 600 mm). These superior forces were thrown into the third major offensive. For 3 weeks Sevastopol heroically dealt with the repeated and ever more relentless enemy attacks. But the forces were unequal, the strength of the defenders melted away, and there was a shortage of ammunition. On July 29 bitter street fighting broke out with Nazi units penetrating into the city. In the evening of next day, when ammunition, food supplies and drinking water had obviously dwindled, the remaining troops of the Sevastopol Defense Area withdrew with fighting from the city on orders of the GHQ. Part of the defensive forces were evacuated, and others slipped through to the partisans in the Crimean Mountains.

The enemy's losses at Sevastopol amounted to 300,000 in killed and wounded, i.e., as much as the German armies had lost on all the theaters of operations before their attack on the Soviet Union. Having pinned down large forces of German and Romanian troops in a protracted battle, the defenders of Sevastopol foiled the plans of the Nazi command at the southern wing of the Soviet-German front.

The failures of the first months of the war had put the Red Army in a difficult position. For all that, the hopes of the Nazi command for a quick defeat of the USSR were dashed. The Wehrmacht's summer campaign ended far from what the German strategists had planned it to be. Not a

single objective of the Barbarossa plan on any of the strategic directions had been completed at the set time. The average daily pace of the enemy's advance had dropped considerably, and his losses were becoming ever more tangible. By the end of September the Nazis had lost over 552,000 in killed, wounded and missing in action on the Soviet-German front.

The Red Army's Victory at Moscow

In the autumn of 1941 the Nazi troops concentrated their main effort on the Moscow direction, to which they had moved up 75 divisions numbering 1.8 million officers and men, 1,700 tanks and 1,390 planes, i.e., nearly half of the troops engaged on the Soviet-German front. With a half as much again superiority in troops and double in tanks, aircraft and artillery, the enemy counted on swift and powerful blows, therefore giving the whole operation the high-sounding codename Typhoon.

The Party's Central Committee and the GHQ adopted every measure to bar the enemy from getting to Moscow. Over 40 percent of the Red Army's forces fighting on the front from the Baltic to the Black Sea were concentrated on the Moscow direction. A solid Reserve Front was established in the rear of the Soviet troops defending the far approaches to the capital. In preparation for Moscow's defense, the building of the 200-kilometer long Rzhev-Vyazma and Mozhaisk lines was launched back in July-September. All the activity in the capital was subordinated to the purposes of struggle with the enemy. In Moscow 12 volunteer divisions were activated, and 11 of them took up positions on the Rzhev-Vyazma defense line. Over 200,000 Muscovites were on voluntary fire brigades. The air approaches to the capital were defended by fighter aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery.

On September 30 the enemy assumed the offensive. In his address to the troops, Hitler declared: "In three and a half months preconditions have been created to smash at last the enemy with a mighty blow before the onset of winter. All preparations, as far as human effort could make it possible, have been completed... Today begins the last decisive battle of this year."

Enjoying a great superiority in manpower, the enemy breached the Soviet defenses and encircled part of the troops of the Western and Reserve Fronts on October 7. Throughout a week, the encircled troops, suffering from acute shortage of armaments and ammunition, fought their way to the east. Many fell in action. A considerable part of the troops broke through the encirclement and withdrew to the Mozhaisk defense line. Their staunch action had pinned down 28 Nazi divisions, which made it possible for the Western Front to win time for organizing resistance on the approaches to Moscow.

The threat to Moscow increased with every day. The enemy seized Kalinin, Volokolamsk, Kaluga, Mozhaisk, Orel and approached Tula. The Nazi leaders were already preparing for a parade on Red Square. Advancing with the forward units was a specially organized SS-Sonderkommando Moskau charged with the mission to be among the first to burst into the capital, capture leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government and deal with Party functionaries and government officials.

During those grim days the State Defense Committee, the GHQ and the Party organization of Moscow carried on extensive work to reinforce the defense of the capital. A state of siege was announced in the city on October 19. Almost all reserve units, the troops of the Moscow garrison, military schools and volunteer units were promptly sent to the Mozhaisk defense line. At the same time new divisions from Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Far East were arriving at the Western Front. New anti-tank ditches, dragon's teeth, slashings, hedgehogs and permanent weapon emplacements were being built and installed on the approaches to Moscow round the clock. The workers boosted production of armaments and ammunition.

Regular troops and volunteer units staunchly defended the capital, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. During the engagements at Volokolamsk the division under General I.V. Panfilov and a regiment of cadets put 80 tanks out of action and destroyed several hundred enemy officers and men within 6 days of fighting. On October 24 the 289th Anti-tank Regiment, firing at close range, destroyed dozens of enemy tanks within 12 hours. The gun crew of Junior Sergeant Pyotr Stemasov alone put 9 tanks out of

action, which won Stemasov the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

As a result of the continuous reinforcement of Soviet troops and their tenacity the enemy's advance ground to a halt. This was the first major success of the Red Army, indicating important changes in the balance of forces.

During those tense days the Soviet people marked the 24th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution. Despite the proximity of the front line, a meeting was held in Moscow on November 6, and on the 7th a military parade was staged in Red Square. From the rostrum on the Lenin Mausoleum Joseph Stalin addressed the troops, calling on them to intensify their blows on the enemy and fulfil their mission of liberation. Right from Red Square the troops marched to the front line.

The meeting, military parade and the Party's appeal had a tremendous effect in fortifying the morale of the Soviet people, instilling in them confidence that Moscow would not fall and that the enemy would in the end be destroyed.

The threat still hung over the capital. In the middle of November the Nazis pulled up large reserves and resumed the offensive. The hittest fighting was waged to the north-west of the capital where the enemy, though slowly, kept on advancing towards Moscow.

Marshal G.K. Zhukov, then commander of the Western Front, recalled: "Soon after the German tactical breakthrough in the 30th Army sector of the Kalinin Front ... Stalin phoned me and asked:

"Are you sure we'll be able to hold Moscow? It hurts me to ask you this. Answer me truthfully, as a Communist."

"We'll definitely hold Moscow. But we'll need at least two more armies and another two hundred tanks."

"It's good that you are so confident. Call the General Staff and make arrangements for the assignment of the two reserve armies you are asking for. They will be ready by late November. Right now we can't get you any tanks yet..."¹

"Our frontage curved dangerously, forming weak spots here and there. The irreparable seemed likely to happen

¹ Marshal of the Soviet Union G. Zhukov, *Reminiscences and Reflections*, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1985, p. 35.

any moment. But no! The soldiers had not lost heart; they organized an impenetrable defence as soon as reinforcements arrived."¹

An extremely dangerous situation developed in late November when 2 of the enemy's panzer groups delivered an attack on Yakhroma and Krasnaya Polyana on the northern approaches to Moscow. The enemy was now within 27 kilometres from Moscow. The German generals reported to Hitler that they were seeing the Kremlin towers through their field glasses. At this gravely critical moment the Soviet command fed troops of the reserve armies into the battle; their action forced the enemy to halt the attack, and in some places even to withdraw. In early December the collapse of Operation Typhoon was an accomplished fact. In the 20 days of the second phase of the attack the Germans lost 155,000 officers and men, some 800 tanks, 300 field guns and mortars, and a considerable number of aircraft.

The Soviet troops fought at Moscow with exceptional staunchness, displaying stout endurance and steadfastness. The feat of the 28 men from the 316th Rifle Division fighting at the Dubosekovo Halt went down as a grand epic in the annals of the war. Defending their position, the men met the attack of 50 panzer. The battle raged for 4 hours, in which the defenders put 18 panzer out of action and inflicted heavy losses on enemy infantry. But the attack continued. "Russia is vast, but there is nowhere to retreat. Moscow is behind us," said political officer Vasili Klochkov to his comrades, and the men stood their ground. At a critical moment in the battle, the wounded Klochkov tied some grenades together and threw himself under a panzer to stop the enemy. Almost all of his men died but did not retreat. This stand of valor won them the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The artillerymen of the 16th Army put 65 panzer out of action in 5 days during the second enemy offensive. Victor Grigoryev, a driver of a heavy tank, set fire to two panzer. But an enemy shell hit the turret of his machine, so he directed it at the panzer and toppled it in a ramming blow.

¹ Ibid., p. 37.

Soviet partisans incessantly harassed the enemy around Moscow. Over 40 partisan units and 377 subversion groups were active in the vicinity of the capital. Among them were many YCL members. Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a partisan girl, is perhaps the most popular hero among the young. While on a combat mission in the village of Petrishchevo, she was captured. The fascists tortured her, then walked her around in the snow barefoot and undressed. A crowd of peasants were herded together to watch her being hanged. Standing on the platform under the gallows, she exclaimed: "Comrades! Don't be downcast, fight them, beat them! It is a happiness to die for your nation!"

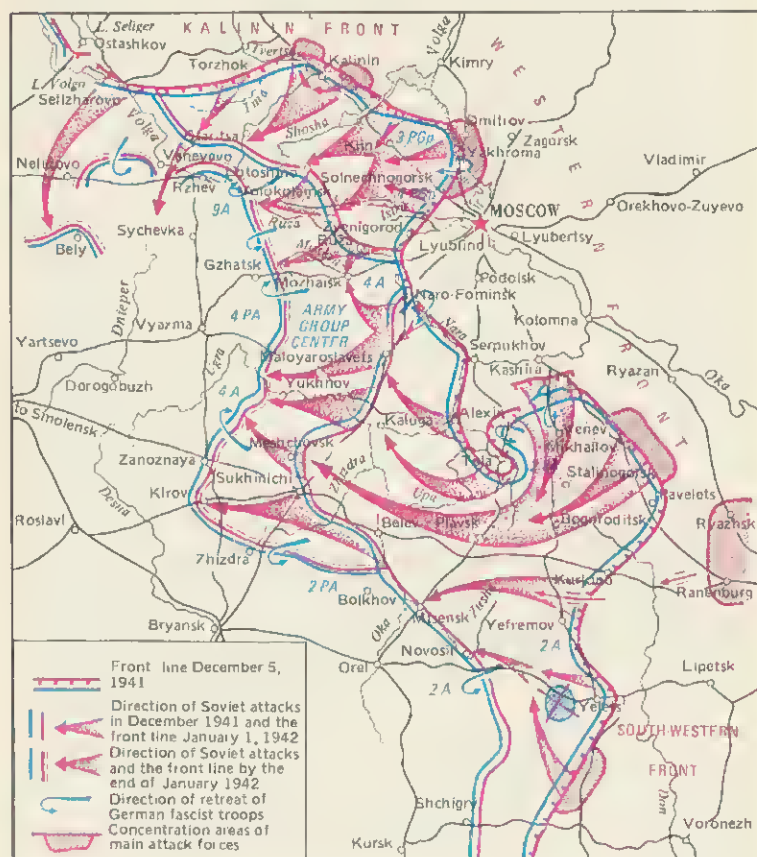
Partisans and underground fighters fell on enemy columns and supply transports, blew up ammunition and fuel depots and bridges, and destroyed communication lines, thereby helping the success of the troops in the field.

In the course of the defensive battles, the Soviet command built up large reserves and developed a plan to destroy the enemy central grouping. On December 5-6 the replenished troops of the Western, Kalinin and South-Western Fronts under G.K. Zhukov, I.S. Konev and S.K. Timoshenko launched a counteroffensive and after intensive fighting defeated the enemy groups first on the flanks and then in the center of the battlefield. The enemy was thrown back 100 to 400 kilometers, and over 11,000 towns and villages were cleared of the invaders. In the battles at Moscow the Red Army destroyed 54 enemy divisions, including 11 panzer divisions. The enemy lost 500,000 officers and men in killed, wounded and captured. He lost some of his best officers who either died in action or were removed from the posts because of their pessimistic or panicky mood. Dozens of high-ranking military leaders were dismissed from the Wehrmacht. "Such a pogrom of generals had not been seen since the battle of the Marne," wrote the British military historian J.F.C. Fuller. "The German army could not, in the end, regain its lost energy, and in the eyes of the entire world it lost its halo of invincibility". Army Group Center was saved from utter defeat only by the 12 divisions that were transferred from Western Europe to Russia.

The counteroffensive of the Soviet troops at Moscow grew over into a general offensive of the Red Army which

continued till April 1942.

The victory at Moscow had a tremendous political and strategic significance. It blasted the myth of the invincibility of Hitler's armies, frustrated completely the plan of a Blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union, and demonstrated the Red Army's firmness of morale and fighting efficiency, and the Soviet people's determination to defeat the enemy.



The Defeat of the German Fascist Troops at Moscow and the Offensive of the Red Army in the Winter of 1942

The whole world followed the outcome of the battle of Moscow. The Nazis' defeat inspired hope in the hearts of Soviet Union's friends; it actuated the anti-fascist and liberation struggle of the enslaved nations, sobering those of the foes of the USSR who had rubbed their hands with glee, anticipating the Red Army's defeat. The victory was the first major defeat of the Nazis in the Second World War and marked the beginning of a reversal in the course of the war.

The Turning Point in the War

Throughout the winter battles of 1941-1942 the blows of the Red Army seriously battered the fascist war machine. But Nazi Germany was still very powerful and prepared for a large summer campaign in which it hoped to score decisive successes.

Taking advantage of the absence of a second front in Europe, the German command built up its forces on the Soviet-German front which remained the principal battleground in the Second World War. By the summer of 1942 the enemy had 240 divisions on Soviet soil, and by autumn their number had grown to 266, which was much more than at the outset of the invasion, while the Anglo-American forces were opposed only by 11 to 12 Nazi divisions in North Africa and southern Europe.

By May 1942 the enemy had fielded against the Red Army 6.2 million officers and men, up to 57,000 artillery pieces and mortars, 3,200 tanks and assault guns, and up to 3,400 warplanes, which had gained him substantial superiority in manpower and materiel. Given the increased resistance of the Soviet troops, however, the Nazi command could not launch an offensive with large forces along the entire front as it did in 1941, but only in one direction.

The enemy delivered the main attack on the southern flank of the Soviet-German front, intending to seize the Caucasus and reach the Volga. By the enemy's reasoning, the loss of the southern oil-producing regions, highly important industrially and agriculturally, would force the USSR to stop resistance. The Nazi leaders hoped that the seizure of the Caucasus would speed up the entry of Turkey

into the war against the Soviet Union and open for them the path to the Middle East and eventually to India.

The Red Army was also thoroughly preparing for the new battles. By spring its strength had grown substantially, and its equipment had increased as well. By May 1942 the armed forces in the field numbered 5.1 million troops, some 45,000 pieces of ordnance and mortars, 3,900 tanks, and about, 2,200 warplanes. The battlecraft of the Soviet commanders and men had increased considerably by that time.

Taking into account the enemy's overall superiority in manpower and materiel, the Soviet command decided in the spring and early summer to assume an active strategic defense so as to frustrate the prepared enemy offensive, complete the reorganization of troops and build up reserves for an offensive.

The Battle of Stalingrad

In the spring and summer of 1942 the warring sides clashed in strenuous battles on the south-western direction. After bitter fighting in the vicinity of Kharkov where the Red Army could not avoid failure, the enemy troops quickly pushed on towards the Volga. The enemy's advancing force in this direction was made up of the 6th Army and the 4th Panzer Army, the 8th Italian and 3rd Romanian Army, up to 50 divisions with a total strength of over one million.

In the middle of July the 6th Army reached the big bend of the Don and created a serious threat of penetration on the Stalingrad direction. On July 17 the forward units of the 62nd and 64th Armies of the Stalingrad Front engaged the advancing enemy on the line of the River Chir before the Don. Thus the battle of Stalingrad ensued.

The German 6th Army enjoyed an overwhelming superiority in manpower and materiel and was supported by the 4th Air Fleet numbering 1,200 aircraft. The undermanned Soviet troops defending the lines offered stiff resistance. For 6 days the Soviet units waged an unequal battle for every position they held on the River Chir. In the vicinity of Kletskaya 4 anti-tank riflemen under Pyotr Boloto, with only 2 anti-tank rifles and grenades to fight with, beat off the attacks of 30 panzer in a day, putting 15 of

them out of action. On another sector 4 men of the 40th Guards Divisions held their position for 2 days, repelling the savage attacks of the Nazis. When they exhausted their ammunition, Junior Lieutenant Vasili Kochetkov, Privates Mikhail Stepanenko, Vasili Chirkov and Mikhail Shuktomov threw themselves with bundles of tied-up grenades under the panzer and blocked their further advance. In air battles, 4 fighters under Lieutenant Mikhail Baranov from the 268th Air Division took on 25 enemy planes. Baranov downed 4 planes. The enemy met with stiff resistance also on the other sectors of the front.

The enemy tried to outflank the Soviet troops in order to encircle them at the big bend of the Don and break through to Stalingrad from march columns. This plan was frustrated by the defending 62th and 64th Armies with the assistance of the reserve armies which were transferred to this area. By August 10 the Soviet troops had withdrawn to the left bank of the Don where they took up defensive positions covering approaches to Stalingrad and stopped the enemy's advance.

The German command was forced to regroup its forces. The 4th Panzer Army engaged in the Caucasus was redirected to attack Stalingrad from the south-east. But here, too, it was contained 30 kilometers from the city by the stiff resistance and a counterattack of Soviet troops.

Still, in the middle of August, the enemy succeeded in crossing the Don, reaching the Volga north of Stalingrad towards the evening of August 23. That same day German aircraft subjected Stalingrad to a massive air raid. Wave after wave, hundreds of bombers flew over the city, showering it with high explosive and incendiary bombs. Stalingrad was ablaze. It suffered from air raids in subsequent days as well.

The enemy tried to break into the city from march columns in the north-west, but was met with fierce fire from anti-aircraft artillery and the stout resistance of the garrison and the armed units manned by workers of the local Tractor, Barrikady and Krasny Oktyabr works. Olga Kovalyova, a woman metallurgist, fought heroically in one such detachment. She died in action on August 25 while raising the men for a counterattack. That same day a state of siege was declared in the city. In response to the city's

defense committee, thousands of residents enlisted in volunteer units and joined the troops in the trenches. Throughout August 24-25 alone over 2,000 volunteers left for the front, then another 8,000. The workers who remained at the plants continued manufacturing and repairing armaments and military equipment under constant enemy fire. The assembly of tanks was carried on in the shops of the local tractor works. The ready machines were filled with fuel and issued ammunition loads then and there. Workers took their places at the levers of the tanks and drove them into battle right from the assembly line.

The enemy paid dearly for every inch of ground he gained. Within only the first 10 days of September he lost 24,000 troops in dead on the approaches to Stalingrad. By September 12 he had reached the city, and next day he started taking its blocks of buildings by storm. The 62nd and 64th Armies (commanding Generals V.I. Chuiikov and M.S. Shumilov) bore the brunt of the battles in the city which lasted for 2 months and were distinctive for their unusual stiffness and ferocity. They were waged not only for every block of buildings, but for every house, every ruined building and factory shop, every intact house floor and staircase. The Mamayev Hill dominating the city changed hands several times. "Beyond the Volga there's no land for us!"—these words by the famous sniper of the Stalingrad Front Vasili Zaitsev were accepted by all the city's defenders. Gallantry was displayed by all the arms and branches of the service engaged at Stalingrad. Two machine gunners, Mikhail Nachinkin and Yurko Tarakul, took up position in a two-storey brick building, from which they repelled attack after attack, raking the enemy with fire. The enemy's artillery destroyed the house, but it kept on spitting fire from ruined windows and walls. On the third day the Nazis called in the air force which razed the house to the ground. Wounded, hungry and exhausted, the machine gunners shifted their position to the basement and continued fighting. On the sixth day their comrades came to their rescue.

Here is another example. A small group of men under Sergeant Yakov Pavlov consolidated their position in a four-storey house. The Nazis repeatedly attacked but failed to capture the house, the approaches to which were covered

with the enemy dead. The Pavlov's House became an impregnable fortress. Its defenders stood their ground for 2 months, until the enemy was defeated in Stalingrad.

The battle gained in ferocity with every passing day. The Nazis fed ever new divisions into the battle, and increased the intensity of the bombardments and air raids of the Soviet-held districts. In the 68 days of defensive actions the enemy's artillery fired some 900,000 gun and mortar shells, not counting the shells of tanks and assault guns. German warplanes flew from 1,000 to 2,500 sorties a day. The enemy spent up to 76,000 bombs and shells per each kilometer square at the Stalingrad Front. During this period the Soviet artillery and air force brought down on the enemy over 100,000 shells and bombs in the direction of the main effort alone.

The firing of hundreds of guns and the detonations of bombs and shells merged into an uninterrupted pandemonium. Smoke, clouds of dust and flames enveloped the city. It seemed that nothing living could survive in this sea of fire and lethal metal. But the defenders of Stalingrad stood their ground.

Colonel Wilhelm Adam, aide at the headquarters of the German 6th Army, wrote: "The Soviet troops fought for every inch of land. We took almost for incredible the report of General von Wittersheim commanding the 14th Tank Corps... The general reported that Red Army formations were counterattacking, supported by the entire population of Stalingrad which displayed exceptional courage. This is evidenced not only by the building of defenses, or by factories and large buildings turned into strongholds. The population has taken to arms. Workers in their working clothes are lying on the battlefield, rifles or pistols frequently clenched in their frozen hands... We have never seen anything like that."

The Nazis failed to gain control of the entire city. After losing hundreds of thousands of troops in killed and wounded, they broke off their attacks and assumed the defensive.

While the city's defenders were wearing down the enemy in fierce fighting, the Soviet Supreme Command decided to encircle and defeat the German grouping at Stalingrad.

The operation was assigned to the South-Western, Don

and Stalingrad Fronts under Generals N.F. Vatutin, K.K. Rokossovsky and A.I. Yeremenko respectively.

Both sides had about an equal number of troops, while the Soviet side enjoyed a substantial superiority in tanks and artillery, and some in aircraft. The general concept of the operation was to pin down the enemy in Stalingrad with frontal attacks, while the main attacks would be delivered on the flanks north-west and south of the city by the main forces which would reach the rear of the enemy grouping, encircle and destroy it. On the sectors of the future breach large numbers of troops and equipment were concentrated to provide for a 2- to 2.5-fold superiority in manpower and a 4- to 5-fold superiority in artillery and tanks.

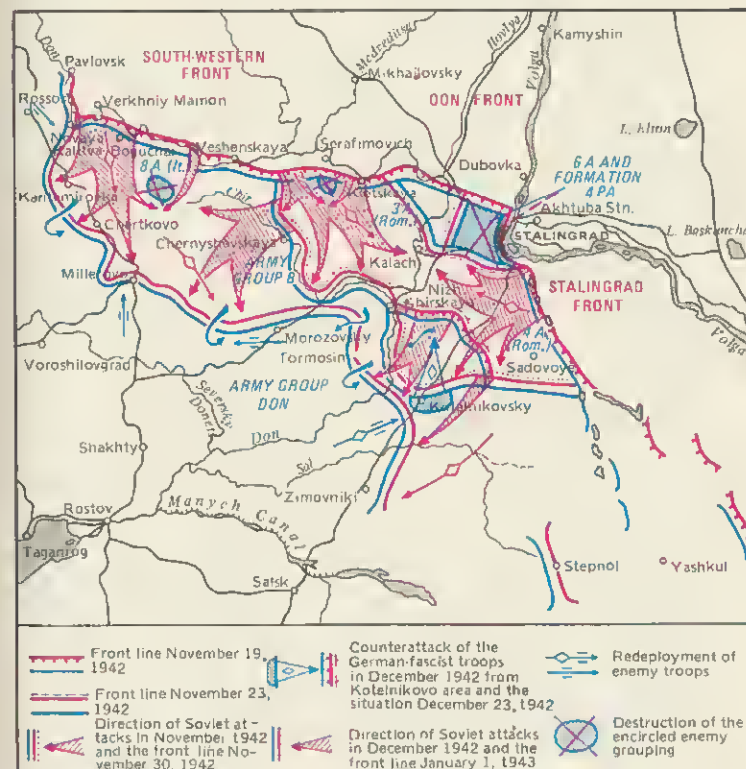
In the morning of November 19, 1942 some 7,000 guns rent the silence of the mist-enveloped Don steppe, when the artillery of the South-Western and Don Fronts deployed north-west of Stalingrad opened up on the enemy. An hour and a half later Soviet infantry and tanks launched an attack, breached the enemy defenses and successfully pushed on to link up with the Stalingrad Front which on November 20 had assumed the offensive from its lines south of the city in the direction of Kalach.

On November 23, the advance detachment of the 4th Tank Corps, South-Western Front, linked up with the 4th Mechanized Corps, Stalingrad Front, at the hamlet of Sovetsky near Kalach. The ring around Stalingrad was thus closed, trapping 22 German divisions, a total of 330,000 officers and men. The history of warfare had not recorded any other case of such a gigantic mass of troops surrounded. The Nazi command tried to come to the aid of the encircled army. Army Group Don, 30 divisions under Hitler's favorite General Field marshal Manstein, was transferred from the vicinity of Kotelnikovo to the north of Stalingrad. But its path was blocked by General N.I. Trufanov's 51st Army and General R.Y. Malinovsky's 2nd Guards Army. In heavy fighting the Soviet troops stopped the enemy's advance and then forced him to retreat.

By January 1943 the enemy troops were thrown 200 to 250 kilometers back from the Stalingrad pocket. The end of the encircled troops became inevitable. The greater part of the territory they held was ranged through by artillery

fire. Soviet anti-aircraft crews and fighter pilots destroyed the enemy transport planes, foiling airlifts of ammunition, fuel and food supplies to the encircled troops.

To avoid needless bloodshed, the Soviet command on January 8 delivered the encircled troops an ultimatum to capitulate. The officers and men were guaranteed life and security, and return to Germany after the war was over. But on Hitler's order the demand was rejected. So the troops of the Don Front embarked on liquidating the surrounded grouping. A mighty attack broke it up into parts, and the



Encirclement and Rout of German Fascist Troops at Stalingrad

garrisons of the strong points were neutralized one after another. On February 2 combat actions on the banks of the Volga came to an end.

Between January 10 and February 2, 1943 the troops of the Don Front destroyed 22 of the entrapped divisions and over 160 reinforcement and logistics units. Some 91,000 enemy troops, including 2,500 officers and 24 generals with General Field marshal Paulus, were taken prisoner. The enemy lost some 140,000 in killed.

The battle of Stalingrad was the fiercest in the Second World War. In scale, intensity and consequences it had no match in history. For 200 days the battle raged between the Volga and the Don. During some of its phases over two million troops, 2,000 tanks, 2,300 aircraft and 25,000 field guns were engaged on both sides. Throughout the battle Soviet troops destroyed 60 enemy divisions.

The armies of the fascist bloc lost about a quarter of their forces on Soviet-German front—some 1.5 million in killed, wounded and captured, 3,000 tanks and assault guns, 4,400 aircraft and 12,000 artillery pieces and mortars.

The victory at Stalingrad had a tremendous military and political significance. It marked the beginning of the turning tide in the Second World War. The Red Army firmly grasped the strategic initiative and retained it right up to the end of the war.

Following the battle of Stalingrad, 180 units were titled Guards units in recognition of their merits displayed in action. Tens of thousands of fighters were awarded state decorations; 700,000 were decorated the medal For the Defense of Stalingrad.

The defeat on the banks of the Volga rocked the entire war machine of Nazi Germany, undermined the morale of the population and the troops. Wrote former Wehrmacht general Siegfried Westphal: "The disaster of Stalingrad profoundly shocked the German people and armed forces alike: indeed it may be said to have horrified them. Never before in Germany's history had so large a body of troops come to so dreadful an end."¹ A three-day mourning was declared in Germany. The catastrophe on the Volga aggravated the political situation in the countries allied with

¹ *The Fatal Decisions*, New York, 1956, p. 190.

Nazi Germany—Italy, Hungary and Romania.

The German defeat at Stalingrad occasioned a new upsurge in the national liberation and Resistance movements in France, Yugoslavia, Poland, Belgium, Greece, Albania and other nations. It actuated the anti-fascist movement in the Axis countries as well.

The victory at Stalingrad had a tremendous impact on world public opinion, increasing the international prestige of the Soviet Union and its armed forces. On the occasion of the victory King George VI of Great Britain presented the citizens of Stalingrad a ceremonial sword with the engraved inscription: "To the Steel-Hearted Citizens of Stalingrad". US President Franklin Roosevelt sent a scroll reading: "In the name of the people of the United States of America, I present this scroll to the City of Stalingrad, to commemorate our admiration for its gallant defenders whose courage, fortitude and devotion during the siege of September 13, 1942 to January 31, 1943 will inspire forever the hearts of all free people. Their glorious victory stemmed the tide of invasion and marked the turning point in the war of the Allied Nations against the forces of aggression."

In conjunction with the battle of Stalingrad, operations were mounted in the North Caucasus, turning the rolling steppelands, picturesque foothills, alpine passes, and shadowy gorges of a country lauded by many a poet into an arena of bloody battles. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1942 the German Army Group A, enjoying an overwhelming superiority in tanks, managed to reach the foothills of the Main Caucasian Range. But its further advance on this line was checked by a stout resistance of the Soviet troops who frustrated the Nazis' plans to penetrate into Transcaucasia to seize its oil fields, establish direct contact with the Turkish army and open the way for the Wehrmacht to the Middle East.

In January 1943, the Southern (former Stalingrad) and Transcaucasian Fronts, supported by the Black Sea Fleet, mounted an offensive with the objective of smashing the enemy's grouping in the Caucasus. The main effort was delivered in the direction of Rostov, which threatened the enemy troops deployed in the Caucasus with encirclement. Trying to execute a planned withdrawal of Army Group A,

the German command made vain attempts to organize resistance on the intermediate lines. In the course of a number of successive operations, the Soviet troops inflicted a defeat on the enemy's main forces. By May 1943 the enemy was expelled from the territory of some 200,000 square kilometers, including the North Caucasus (except for the Taman Peninsula), the Kuban area and the south-eastern Ukraine. In the autumn of 1943, the enemy grouping in Taman was eliminated as well.

In recognition of the defenders' distinctive merits, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet instituted the medal For the Defense of the Caucasus which was awarded to over 580,000 troops.

Simultaneously with the operations in the Caucasus, the Red Army undertook offensive actions on a number of other directions. In January, the Leningrad and Volkhov Fronts, as mentioned earlier, mounted offensive operations to break the blockade of Leningrad. At the same time, the Voronezh Front encircled and routed the 2nd Hungarian Army and the remainder of the 8th Italian Army, after which they joined forces with the Bryansk Front and inflicted defeat on the 2nd German Army, liberating the large cities of Voronezh and Kursk. On the southwestern sector of the Soviet-German front, the eastern part of the Donbas and the southern part of Kharkov Region were liberated by the middle of February.

Soviet troops were also successful in the western direction, where the enemy's Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead was eliminated in February and March. The enemy troops were thus hurled further away from Moscow by an additional 130 to 160 kilometers, which made the position of the capital more secure.

It was at that time that the name of Alexander Matrosov became known across the nation. He was a private in the 2nd Battalion of the 81st Rifle Brigade, the Kalinin Front. On February 23, 1943, at an important strong point at the village of Chernushki in Pskov Region, an enemy machine-gun firing from a pillbox pinned down the attacking troops. At the critical moment Matrosov, who had tried to blow up the pillbox with hand grenades, rushed forward and covered the firing port with his body. His comrades were thus spared the deadly fire and could

successfully pursue their attack. Matrosov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union posthumously, and his regiment was named in his honor.

The second winter campaign ended in substantial success for the Red Army. Over 100 enemy divisions were destroyed, and on several sectors the enemy was thrown 600 to 700 kilometers back west. Soviet troops liberated some important industrial and agricultural regions, their prewar population 15.5 million.

The Battle of Kursk

The Soviet command was preparing a new large offensive in the summer of 1943. The troops were supplied with more sophisticated weaponry and equipment. The Nazi leadership was also preparing for a new summer campaign, hoping to wreak revenge for Stalingrad and change the development of the war in their favor. To offset the heavy losses it had sustained in the war, a total mobilization was announced in Germany, and the munitions industry increased its production.

Due to the absence of a second front in Europe, the Nazis could still afford to engage about 75 percent of their armed forces in the east. They decided to mount a large-scale offensive codenamed Operation Citadel in the vicinity of Kursk where a large bulge (Kursk Bulge) had developed as a result of the offensive of the Soviet troops in the winter of 1942-1943. The operation envisaged to deliver two simultaneous encounter attacks in the general direction of Kursk from the areas around Orel and Kharkov, encircle and destroy the troops of the Central and Voronezh Fronts positioned on the Kursk Bulge, and then destroy the formations of the South-Western Front in a rear attack. Then the enemy intended to penetrate deep into the rear of the Soviet central grouping and cut the railroads running south from Moscow.

To conduct the operation the enemy concentrated 50 most battleworthy divisions (including 16 panzer and motorized divisions) with a total strength of over 900,000 troops, 10,000 artillery pieces and mortars, 2,700 tanks and assault guns, and over 2,000 aircraft. Great hopes were placed on the massive employment of new weapons,

specifically the powerful Tiger and Panther panzer and the Ferdinand self-propelled guns which were to serve as a ram in the direction of the main effort.

The Soviet command had intelligence information about the enemy's intentions and introduced appropriate changes into its plans. It decided to wear out and bleed the enemy grouping with deliberate defensive action, and then, launching a counteroffensive, deal it a decisive defeat and embark on a general offensive in the western and south-western directions. The Central and Voronezh Fronts were charged with the mission to repulse the attacks. These fronts incorporated 1,336,000 troops, 19,098 artillery pieces and mortars, 3,444 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 2,172 aircraft. In the rear of the Kursk Bulge, large reserves had been concentrated, the troops of the Steppe Front under General I.S. Konev.

The Soviet troops had prepared stable defenses 300 kilometers deep. Particular attention was attached to building anti-tank defenses. The local population rendered the troops assistance in building the defenses.

The battle of Kursk started at dawn on July 5. The Soviet command decided to forestall the enemy attack by a powerful artillery and air bombardment. The overwhelming fire inflicted high losses on the German troops. Yet the huge Nazi war machine prepared for the attack was brought into action 2 to 3 hours later.

On the northern sector, in the zone of the Central Front, the enemy delivered his main effort against the 13th Army (General N.P. Pukhov). Leading the attack were the Tiger panzer accompanied by Ferdinand self-propelled guns, followed by medium panzer and infantry mounted on armored carriers. The Soviet troops neutralized the panzer with artillery and anti-tank rifle fire, hand grenades and incendiary bottles. The rifle units cut off with fire and destroyed the enemy infantry attacking in the wake of the panzer. Soviet aircraft went into action against the panzer, using for the first time anti-tank bombs with hollow-cone charges. The artillerymen of the 3rd Anti-tank Brigade under Colonel V.N. Rukosuyev beat off 20 attacks within 4 days and put 146 panzer out of action. The men of the battery under Captain G. Igishev put 19 panzer out of action in one day. Almost all the men of the battery died in

action but did not fall back. On July 6, fighter pilot Alexander Gorovets engaged 20 enemy bombers and downed 9 of them, the only case in history of a pilot having downed such a number of aircraft in one air combat.

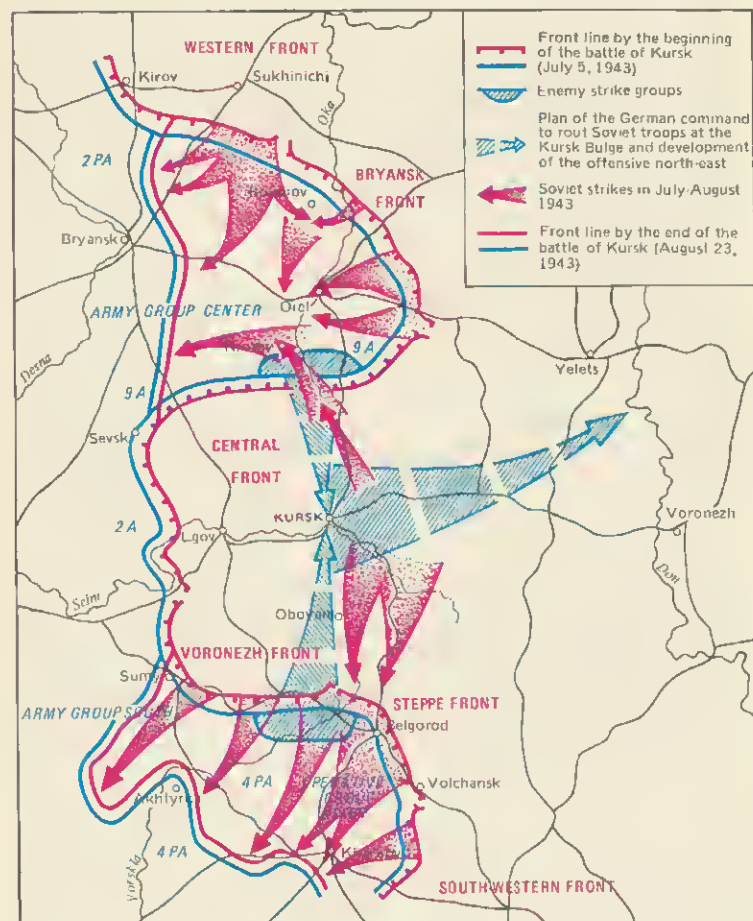
In 6 days of fighting, the Germans succeeded in penetrating the defenses of the Central Front in the area of Olkhovatka and Ponyri in a narrow sector 10 kilometers wide and only 10 to 12 kilometers deep. Losing 42,000 troops and 800 tanks, they broke off the attack.

Fierce fighting developed in the southern part of the Kursk Bulge within the zone of the Voronezh Front. Here the enemy, after a massive artillery preparation and air support, delivered the main attack on the 6th Guards Army (General I.M. Chistyakov) and the 1st Tank Army (General M.Y. Katukov) at Oboyan. The enemy committed to action 700 panzer and self-propelled guns supported by aircraft. The Soviet troops defended every trench, every position with immense determination. The 196th Regiment of the 67th Guards Division was enveloped by the enemy and fought in the encirclement. In the early hours of July 6, the regiment received orders to break through the ring and secure a new line. Its withdrawal was covered by a platoon of submachine gunners under Junior Lieutenant G.F. Aleko. For several hours the men repelled the attacks of a superior enemy who lobbed hundreds of gun and mortar shells on the positions of the platoon. Few of them survived while the rest of the regiment took up a new defense line.

The 7th Guards Army (General M.S. Shumilov) was stoutly defending positions east of Belgorod. The 214th Regiment of the 73rd Guards Rifle Division met the attack of 120 panzer. Within 12 hours of intense fighting they put 39 panzer out of action, along with some 1,000 enemy troops. The 3rd Battalion, bearing the brunt, had only 150 out of its 450 officers and men remaining in action after it dealt with the panzer attacks. The Battalion Commander A.A. Belgin, Company Commander I.V. Ilyasov and Sergeant S.P. Zorin were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and all the personnel were awarded orders and medals.

By the end of the fifth day of fighting the enemy managed to penetrate from 30 to 35 kilometers into the Soviet

defenses. The further advance in the direction of Kursk through Oboyan was stopped. So the enemy made an attempt to reach Kursk by a turning movement through Prokhorovka. But here the path of the panzer grouping was blocked by the 5th Guards Tank Army under General



The Battle of Kursk

P.A. Rotmistrov and the 5th Guards Army under General A.M. Zhadov who were moved from the reserve. Jointly with the troops operating at this sector, they counterattacked the enemy on July 12.

On this day, in the vicinity of the village of Prokhorovka, the largest tank battle in the history of warfare took place. In all, 1,200 tanks and self-propelled gunmounts on both sides were locked in an unprecedentedly intense and bitter fighting. Subsequently, Marshal P.A. Rotmistrov would write:

"Right from the first minutes of the engagement two mighty avalanches of tanks raising black clouds of dust and smoke moved to meet each other. The first echelon of the attacking tanks of the 5th Guards Tank Army cut into the German attack formations at full speed. The head-on armored attack was so swift that the forward lines of our tanks cut through the entire formation of the enemy. The attack echelons got mixed up... Denied the advantages of their armament in close-range battle, the German Tiger panzer were successfully neutralized by Soviet T-34 tanks, especially when firing at the hull sides.

"Complying with orders, the Guards tankmen fought to their death. The broad field at Prokhorovka proved to be too small for the huge mass of fighting machine... The battle raged into the early hours of the night. Grappling in one gigantic tangle, the tanks could not disengage of one another. The armor-piercing shells of Soviet tanks penetrated the enemy's panzer and exploded their ammunition inside, which frequently made the turrets fly off. Over a hundred panzer and self-propelled guns were ablaze on the field."¹

Both sides sustained heavy losses, but the enemy plan to break through to Kursk from the south was frustrated. By the evening of July 23 the Soviet troops had in the main reestablished the situation that had prevailed before the battle. Thus, the summer campaign the Nazis had planned on a large scale on the eastern front was completely routed within several days of fighting. The offensive strategy of the Wehrmacht was wrecked. The Red Army had worn

¹ P. A. Rotmistrov, *The Tank Battle at Prokhorovka*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 66, 72-73 (in Russian).

out the enemy's crack troops and prepared the conditions for a counteroffensive.

In the morning of July 12, following a powerful artillery and air preparation, the Western Front (General M.M. Popov) and the Bryansk Front (General V.D. Sokolovsky) assumed the offensive in the Orel direction. Three days later they were joined by the Central Front.

The attacks were delivered almost simultaneously from the east, south and north, which threatened the enemy grouping in the area of Orel with encirclement. On August 5, Orel was liberated after bitter fighting, and in the middle of August the enemy's place of arms at Orel was eliminated. The Soviet troops advanced 150 kilometers and inflicted heavy losses on the opposing Army Group Center.

In the offensive, just like during defensive action, the Soviet troops fought courageously. Many continued fighting after being wounded. A number won the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, among them Guards Senior Lieutenant Alexei Maresyev, a fighter pilot. Back at the front line from a hospital where his legs had been amputated up to the knee, he had learned to fly with artificial limbs and in the Orel operation shot down 3 enemy aircraft in dogfights.

During the Orel operation the French Air Regiment Normandie took part in the air combats against the enemy. The French pilots downed several enemy aircraft right in the first days of the battle.

The counteroffensive which the Voronezh and the Steppe Fronts mounted with the support of part of the South-Western Front on August 3 developed successfully as well. On August 5, units of the Steppe Front liberated Belgorod and continued pursuing the offensive. That day the first artillery salute was fired in Moscow in honor of the troops who had liberated Orel and Belgorod. From that time on such salutes became a tradition. During the war 354 salutes were fired in Moscow to mark the decisive victories in battle.

The attempts of the Nazi command to check the Soviet offensive with powerful panzer counterattacks met with failure. In the course of bitter fighting, troops of the Voronezh Front routed the enemy panzer groupings. The Steppe Front, dealing with the formidable defenses and resistance

of the enemy in pitched battles, recaptured Kharkov on August 23. The path to the Left-Bank Ukraine and the Donets coal fields was opened.

Thus ended the Battle of Kursk, one of the largest in the Second World War. It involved over 4 million troops on both sides, more than 69,000 artillery pieces and mortars, over 13,000 tanks and self-propelled guns and 12,000 warplanes.

Attempting to grasp the strategic initiative, the Nazi command committed to action at Kursk nearly half of its divisions on the Soviet-German front. But this did not save the enemy from a crushing defeat. The Wehrmacht's losses amounted to some 500,000 officers and men, 3,000 artillery pieces, 1,500 panzer and over 3,700 warplanes. The panzer troops suffered particularly great losses. And the Soviet air force scored a big success and consolidated its command of the air.

The Soviet Armed Forces demonstrated their superiority in morale, battlecraft, armaments and strategic leadership. Soviet officers and men were distinctive for their fortitude in defense and swift action in offensive battles. Over 100,000 commanders and soldiers were decorated with orders and medals, and 180 won the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Dozens of units and formations were awarded combat decorations, received honorary titles, and became Guards elements.

Soviet partisans also contributed to the victory at Kursk. By the summer of 1943 they were containing over 170,000 enemy officers and men in the rear of Army Group Center. During the battle of Kursk they put on 1,460 raids on railroad lines, destroyed over a thousand locomotives and derailed more than 1,200 enemy trains. The Nazi command was forced to divert substantial forces from the battlefield to protect its communications. The section of the Bryansk-Roslavl railroad alone was guarded by an entire German division.

As a result of the battle of Kursk, the Soviet strategic initiative was consolidated. As the US author Martin Caidin writes in his book *The Tigers Are Burning*, "The important end result of Kursk is this: when the last shots had echoed off into the hills, it was the Russian army that had gathered to itself impetus of the war, and it was the Russian

army that dictated when and where that war would be fought."¹

The battle of Kursk raised still higher the international prestige of the Soviet Union and its armed forces, increasing the Soviet Union's decisive role in the anti-Hitler coalition and promoting its consolidation. On August 6, 1943 US President Franklin Roosevelt wrote in his message to Joseph Stalin, "Your forces have, during a month of tremendous fighting, by their skill, their courage, their sacrifices and their ceaseless effort, not only stopped the long-planned German attack, but have launched a successful counteroffensive of far-reaching import. The Soviet Union can be justly proud of its heroic achievements."

The outcome of the battle of Kursk rent the Axis powers with still greater contradictions and aggravated their internal political situation, while simultaneously galvanizing the liberation struggle of Europe's nations against fascism.

After Kursk Hitler's armies could never recover up to the end of the war. Whereas Stalingrad augured the decline of the German army, Kursk rushed the Wehrmacht to its impending catastrophe.

The Battle for the Dnieper. The "Eastern Rampart" Collapses

As early as the beginning of August, the Soviet counteroffensive at Kursk assumed the scope of a general offensive along the entire length of the front from Velikiye Luki to the Sea of Azov. The Nazi High Command, trying their hardest to stabilize the front, ordered the construction of a defense line. This was called the "Eastern Rampart", and it extended across eastern Estonia, Latvia and Byelorussia and along the Dnieper and Molochnaya Rivers. The crucial sector of the line consisted of the defensive positions on the Dnieper. Upon these the Nazi Command pinned their greatest hopes. "Hold these positions to the last man," said the directive from High Command. Their calculations, however, were shattered by the offensive push of the Red Army. In August and September, having

overcome stubborn resistance from the enemy, Soviet troops recaptured the entire Smolensk Region and reentered Byelorussia. The enemy was driven from the Donbas, from almost all of the Left-Bank Ukraine. The left bank of the Dnieper was cleared along the 700 km stretch from the mouth of the Sozh to the city of Zaporozhye.

The objective set by Soviet Supreme Command was to force the Dnieper on the march and gain bridgeheads on the right bank. This was far from easy. The Dnieper was a formidable obstacle being 700-800 meters wide in its middle reaches and having a strong line of defenses along its steep right bank. Besides, Soviet troops were worn out by continuous action, and their rapid advance meant that their supply bases had been left far behind. This made adequate provision of units and formations with fuel, ammunition and other materiel a serious problem.

The approach to the Dnieper greatly boosted the morale of the Soviet troops. Everyone was straining to begin the crossing simultaneously in many places. Without pausing to wait for engineering units to draw up, men built rafts from logs, boards and barrels, used fishing boats—in short everything at hand. The local population did their best to assist the troops. A great deal was done by the partisans. Striking from the rear, they crippled enemy defenses, helped in capturing crossings and provided the troops with the simplest means of crossing. As the pontoon units drew up, bridges were quickly constructed for the transfer of the guns, tanks and other war machinery to the right bank. This took place under cover of artillery fire and air support.

The breakthrough was executed rapidly, and this to a large extent determined the success of subsequent action. The first units to cross the Dnieper north of Kiev were from the 13th Army of the Central Front. This took place on September 21. The enemy staged a number of powerful counterattacks in an attempt to drive the Soviet troops back into the river, but the latter not only held on to their bridgeheads but also managed to widen them to 35 km. Troops in other sectors of the front displayed similar decisiveness and daring.

The fighting at the crossings and captured bridgeheads abounded in instances of valor on the part of Soviet offi-

¹ Martin Caidin, *The Tigers Are Burning*, Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, 1974, p. 26.

cers and men. The first to cross the Dnieper near the village of Grigorovka south of Kiev were four machine gunners of the 51st Guards Tank Brigade, Vasili Ivanov, Nikolai Petukhov, Ivan Semyonov and Vasili Sysolyatin. They became the target of heavy fire, the enemy attempting to drive them back into the river. However, they managed to hold on to their tiny piece of land. Meanwhile, their own and other units made the crossing and drove the enemy out of Grigorovka. This was the first step in the establishment of the Bukrin bridgehead, which was later to play a major role in the liberation of Kiev. The four guardsmen who were the first to cross the Dnieper were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Bridgeheads were created in several other places. By October, Soviet troops held three larger and two dozen smaller bridgeheads on the right bank. Nazi High Command was greatly disturbed by the fact that a major offensive could be launched from any of these points. As a result the Germans were compelled to divert considerable forces to the area. In early November, the Lutezh bridgehead was chosen as the starting point for an offensive by the 1st Ukrainian Front,¹ which on November 6 drove the Germans out of Kiev. Extending the offensive, Soviet troops advanced 150 km recapturing Fastov and Zhitomir. A strategic area was formed on the right bank along more than 500 km of the front.

One of the units which took part in the liberation of Kiev was the 1st Czechoslovak Brigade under the command of Colonel Ludvik Svoboda. It was formed from the Czechoslovak Battalion which had been formed in the USSR in early 1943.

The battle for the Dnieper was a success for the Red Army. For conspicuous valor and selflessness displayed during the Dnieper breakthrough, over 2,400 men of all ranks were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and tens of thousands were decorated with orders and medals.

The offensive in the south of the Ukraine was also making good headway. During the months of October

¹ As of October 20, 1943, the Voronezh, Steppe, South-Western and Southern Fronts were renamed the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Ukrainian Fronts respectively.

to December troops of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts after tough fighting not only liberated the important industrial centers of Zaporozhye, Dnepropetrovsk and Dneprodzerzhinsk but also built a second strategic area on the Dnieper's west bank. The length of this bridgehead was as great as 450 km, and its depth 100 km. At the same time, the 4th Ukrainian Front reached the lower reaches of the Dnieper and the Perekop Isthmus, crossed the Sivash and established a beachhead in the Crimea thus cutting off the German 17th Army. The position of the enemy trapped up in the Crimea became all the more desperate when in the first half of November troops of the North Caucasian Front supported by the Black Sea Fleet made a successful landing on the east coast. In stormy weather and under heavy fire, with the enemy launching a succession of fierce counteroffensives, units of the 56th Army crossed the Kerch Strait, established a beachhead north-east of Kerch and dug themselves in. This beachhead was later to be of major significance in the liberation of the Crimea.

Soviet troops launched vigorous actions on the central and north-western sectors. In early October, the 1st and 2nd Baltic, the Western and the Byelorussian Fronts assumed the offensive.¹ Striking in the directions of Vitebsk, Orsha, Moghilev, Rogachev, Zhlobin, Gomel and Bobruisk, overcoming strong enemy resistance and breaking through defenses, Soviet troops were thrusting ahead through woods and swamps, across completely roadless terrain. They smashed 40 German divisions of Army Group Center and advanced west 250 km. The enemy was driven from a number of Byelorussia's eastern regions.

At the town of Lenino, Moghilev Region, the 1st Polish Thaddeus Kosciuszko Infantry Division under the command of General Zygmunt Berling went into action as part of the 33rd Army of the Western Front. The division had been formed in the USSR on the initiative of the Union of Polish Patriots, the organization of Polish emigres in the USSR. The Soviet government helped the formation, equip-

¹ In early October 1943, the Bryansk Front, its formations moved north, was transformed into the Baltic Front, renamed the 2nd Baltic Front on October 20. At the same time, the Kalinin and Central Fronts were renamed the 1st Baltic and the Byelorussian.

ment and training of the division.

The fiercest fighting in which Soviet and Polish troops jointly participated took place on October 12 and 13 for Height No. 215.5 and the village of Tregubovo. The courage of the Poles who captured these enemy strongholds was marked by both the Soviet and the Polish command: hundreds of officers and men were decorated with orders and medals of the two countries, and Captain Wladyslaw Wysocki and machine gunner Aniela Krzywon were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The summer and autumn offensive of the Red Army spanned a 2,000-km front and lasted for nearly 5 months. Soviet troops advanced between 300 to 600 km to the west. The enemy was driven out of vast regions of the Russian Federation, the Ukraine and Byelorussia, with a total population of over 25 million. The Red Army crippled as many as 118 German divisions. To save its troops from complete annihilation, the Nazi command had to transfer 40 divisions from the Western Front to the east between April and December 1943.

By late 1943, the course of the war was irreversibly in favor of the Soviet Union, with the Red Army never losing the strategic initiative thenceforth.

On the home front 1943 also marked a turning point. That year, Soviet defense industry produced 24,000 tanks and self-propelled guns, over 130,000 artillery pieces and 35,000 aircraft. The Soviet Union attained a considerable advantage over Nazi Germany in the production of war technology: it was turning out almost 2.5 times as many tanks, 1.5 times as many aircraft, and more than twice as many guns, mortars and small arms.

A movement to set up a defense fund developed across the nation. Workers made monthly contributions from their wages, farmers contributed agricultural produce and proceeds from the additional "defense plots". Young people organized *voskresniks*, working gratis on days-off. The movement embraced all republics of the USSR. In the war years, the donations to the defense fund amounted to over 118 billion rubles. This money was used to build over 2,500 aircraft, several thousand tanks and a lot of other equipment. Trainloads of gifts for the army were sent out to the battle fronts. And 5.5 million people became

regular blood donors, which saved the lives of thousands upon thousands of wounded fighters.

Partisan Warfare in the Enemy Rear

The civilian population of the territories occupied by the Nazis suffered terribly from terror, plundering and general violence. In setting up the bloody regime, the enemy also made wide use of social demagoguery, provocations and lies. Yet, whatever their efforts, the Nazis were unable to break the Soviet people's spirit of resistance.

In the enemy rear, a broad partisan warfare was launched. Over a million people fought in the 6,200 partisan units and underground resistance groups. Small units grew into brigades, and many turned into major partisan formations. They struck at enemy roadlines, arranged railway crashes, blew up bridges and munitions depots, disrupted telephone and telegraph lines and attacked whole enemy columns and garrisons. By late 1943, the Nazis were forced to keep 25 fighting divisions, up to 500,000 auxiliary troops, and numerous punitive detachments on the "domestic front", to be used against the partisans.

The strongest partisan forces were in action in Byelorussia, the northern Ukraine and in the Leningrad Region. A large partisan formation under Sidor Kovpak made a number of long marches in the enemy rear, a total of over 10 thousand km within 26 months, fighting its way across 18 regions of the Ukraine, Russia and Byelorussia. In the course of the marches, 39 enemy garrisons were wiped out, thousands of Nazis and quislings killed, 62 railway crashes staged, 256 bridges and 96 army depots blown up, and 20 tanks and other armored vehicles and several hundred lorries destroyed.

A large partisan unit commanded by Dmitri Medvedev fought in over 100 battles, annihilating a great number of enemy officers and men, including 11 generals, and blew up dozens of enemy railroad trains. It was on this unit that the legendary intelligence agent, a prewar engineer from Sverdlovsk, the Urals, Nikolai Kuznetsov was based. Speaking perfect German and posing as a German army officer, he made his way into enemy HQ, providing information of paramount importance for the Soviet command in Moscow. He also organized bold acts of sabotage in the

enemy rear, killed several Nazi high officials, such as the Ukraine Reichskommissar Funk, his top assistants Gall and Winter and vice-governor of Galicia Bauer, and he abducted General von Ilgen, the commander of the Nazi punitive forces in the Ukraine.

Millions of Soviet people living on the occupied territories also fought the enemy by sabotaging his military and economic projects. At the risk of their lives, they evaded labor conscription, sabotaged machinery and equipment and destroyed raw materials and foodstuffs. As a result, most factories in the occupied areas stood idle. The Nazis thus failed to make the economy of the USSR's occupied territories work for them.

The struggle of the Soviet people in the enemy rear was directed by an extensive network of underground Party bodies, covering the entire occupied territory. At one time or another, over 710 underground regional, city and district Party committees and a wide network of Party organizations were active there.

Vast areas in the enemy rear were controlled by Party bodies and partisan units and formations. In the enemy rear in Bryansk, Smolensk, Kursk, Leningrad and Kalinin Regions and in Byelorussia, Soviet power was restored and continued to function in areas with a total population of some 4 million. These came to be known as partisan areas. There, Soviet government bodies, collective farms, factories and schools functioned as before the war, and the people worked for victory.

The Enemy Is Driven from Soviet Soil

Despite heavy losses and serious setbacks, the Wehrmacht was still strong enough to put up a stubborn resistance to the Red Army. The Soviet-German front retained its principal significance in the World War. Out of the 314 divisions and 8 brigades Nazi Germany possessed in early 1944, over 198 divisions and 6 brigades were tied up on the Eastern front. 38 divisions and 18 brigades of other Axis powers were also there. It is noteworthy that in Belgium, Holland and France, where the landing of Anglo-American troops was expected, only 47 divisions were kept by the

Nazis. However, overall superiority in personnel and armaments was on the side of the Red Army. Soviet troops, who by that time had had plenty of combat experience, demonstrated considerable fighting spirit and military skill. They had excellent commanders and political instructors. The country adequately supplied the front with up-to-date machinery, equipment, weaponry, food and fuel.

The Soviet Offensive in the Winter and Spring of 1944

The year 1944 was the time of devastating strikes by Soviet Armed Forces delivered consecutively and sometimes simultaneously in the various sectors of the extremely long Soviet-German front.

A major Soviet offensive was begun in mid-January from Leningrad and Novgorod. The Leningrad, Volkhov and 2nd Baltic Fronts under the command of Generals Govorov, Meretskov and Popov with support from the Baltic Fleet under Admiral Tributs broke the deeply echeloned enemy defenses along a 600 km front and advanced 180-280 km to the west by the end of February. The German Army Group North suffered a decisive defeat, the siege of Leningrad was raised, almost all of Leningrad and part of Kalinin Regions were cleared of the enemy, and the liberation of Estonia began. Soviet attacks destroyed the so-called Northern Rampart and as a result of this the entire north flank of the enemy collapsed. This latest defeat of the Wehrmacht aggravated the crisis of the Axis powers. The Finnish government entered into negotiations with the USSR to discuss terms of withdrawal from the war.

In January, fighting for the Right-Bank Ukraine began in which the 4 Ukrainian Fronts under Generals Vatutin, Konev, Malinovsky and Tolbukhin took part. They assumed the offensive along the front from the Pripyat River in Byelorussia to the Black Sea. Operations were carried out in the difficult conditions of winter and springtime slush, and continued for about 4 months. In the course of the offensive, Soviet troops surrounded and destroyed 10 Nazi divisions in the area of Korsun-Shevchenkovsky south of Kiev. The enemy lost 55,000 in killed and wounded; over 18,000 Germans were taken prisoner. This operation was rightly nicknamed "Stalingrad on the Dnieper". Carrying

on the offensive, Soviet troops drove the enemy from a number of regions in the Ukraine and a large part of Moldavia.

On March 26, in the operation to liberate the Right-Bank Ukraine, units of the 2nd Byelorussian Front reached the state border of the USSR on the Prut River. The news evoked enthusiasm all over the Soviet Union as a sign of early victory.

But every major victory was achieved only by tremendous effort and at the cost of thousands of lives. In the battles for the Ukraine, General Vatutin, Commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front, was mortally wounded. He was buried in Kiev, in a park over the Dnieper. His mother, a simple peasant woman, stood by his coffin side by side with his comrades-in-arms. In February and March, she had got the news of her two other sons killed in action; now, her third son was being buried. One of the many mothers in grief. After the war, a memorial was erected on the General's grave.

In late March, Soviet troops liberated Nikolayev, and in mid-April, Odessa, both major Black Sea ports. In the fighting for Nikolayev, 67 marines of the 384th Marines Battalion led by Senior Lieutenant Konstantin Olshansky and political officer Alexei Golovlyov as second-in-command played the key role. On the night of March 25/26, 1944, they landed in the Nazi-held city and captured a beachhead, consolidating their positions in the port buildings. This small unit was attacked by three infantry battalions, supported by artillery fire. Several panzer were moved into action against them. The marines repulsed 18 fierce attacks. As many as 700 enemy troops were killed assailing the Soviet positions. Many of the valiant marines fell in the unequal combat, the survivors holding their ground until the morning of March 28, when the port was stormed by Soviet troops. All participants in the landing were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

In the course of the winter and spring offensives the troops of the four Ukrainian Fronts covered 250-450 km and by mid-April had reached the River Dnestr and the Carpathians. The state frontier of the USSR was restored along a length of 400 km. In April and May, operations began for the liberation of the Crimea. Penetrating the enemy

lines across the Perekop Isthmus, south of Sivash and on the Kerch Peninsula, Soviet troops reached the approaches to Sevastopol. The storming of the city began on May 5. The fighting was fierce, particularly for the strongly fortified Sapun Mountain, the key stronghold in the enemy defense. Sevastopol was cleared of the enemy on May 9. The remnants of the German force fled to Cape Khersones, where they were either killed or captured. About 100,000 Germans were killed or wounded; the enemy also lost all military equipment and machinery. Back in 1941-42 it took the Nazis 250 days to capture Sevastopol, while in 1944 Soviet troops broke through the powerful enemy defense lines in the Crimea in 35 days, and stormed the city in 3 days.

The powerful thrusts of the Soviet Armed Forces against the enemy delivered during the winter and spring of 1944 crushed the Wehrmacht's strategic defenses. In just over 4 months, Soviet troops wiped out completely 30 enemy divisions and 6 brigades, and defeated 142 divisions and one brigade. The enemy losses were so great that Germany was unable to make them up throughout 1944. By mid-spring of that year, nearly three-fourths of the occupied Soviet territories were cleared of the invaders. Having secured an advantageous position and maintaining the strategic initiative, Soviet troops were able to prepare for new major offensives.

The victories and the growing might of the Soviet Union made it clear that the prospect of the Red Army's dealing with Nazi Germany single-handedly was real enough. Fearing that this may further strengthen the standing of the Soviet Union, the ruling quarters of the USA and Great Britain speeded up preparations for an invasion of Western Europe. On July 6, the advance Anglo-American forces landed in the north of France. The Second Front was thus opened, albeit two years late. But even then the Soviet-German front remained the decisive one in the war, attracting as it did two-thirds of German forces.

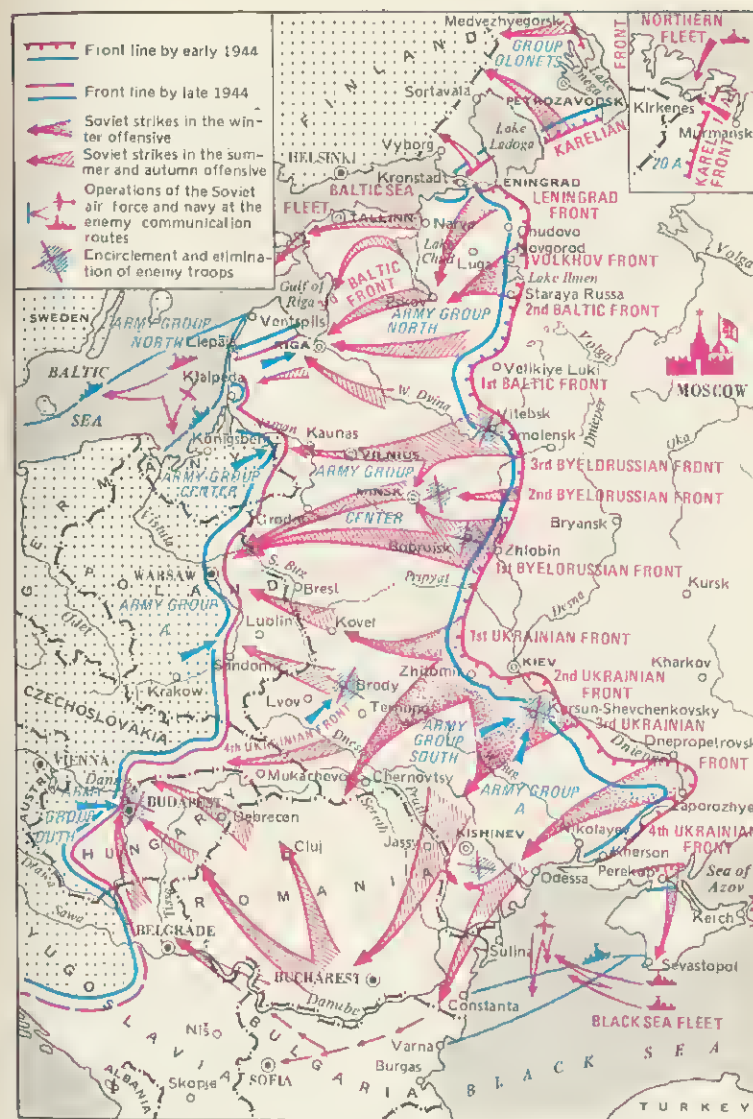
The Second Front, of course, made for a speedier routing of Nazi Germany. But a victory over fascism could have been achieved much earlier and with fewer losses if the USA and Britain had been more consistent in meeting their allied commitments.

Soviet Territory Is Cleared of the Enemy

The third year of the Great Patriotic War was drawing to a close. After a brief lull, large-scale operations were launched once more on the Soviet-German front. In June 1944, the Leningrad and Karelian Fronts assumed the offensive on the Karelian Isthmus and in Southern Karelia. The Red Army pushed the Germans out of the occupied part of Karelia and the towns of Vyborg and Petrozavodsk, and drew up to the Soviet-Finnish border. An ally of Germany, Finland appealed to the Soviet Union for a peace treaty and, having announced a break with Germany, withdrew from the war in September.

The month of June also witnessed the start of another major operation for the Red Army, the liberation of Byelorussia. The republic had been under occupation for three years, and the people had gone through terrible ordeals. The German occupying forces thoroughly plundered the land and mercilessly massacred the civilian population, including women, children and old people. Over 2,200,000 people were killed by the Nazi troops in Byelorussia. About 380,000 people, mostly young men and women, were deported to Germany for forced labor. But the Byelorussians refused to give in to the enemy. 370,000 people fought the invaders in partisan detachments, and hundreds of underground resistance groups were active in the towns.

The offensive in Byelorussia codenamed Operation Bagration was carried out by the 1st Baltic, and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Byelorussian Fronts commanded by Generals I.Kh. Bagramyan, I.D. Chernyakhovsky, G.F. Zakharov and K.K. Rokossovsky. It spread over an enormous area extending over 1,100 km from the Western Dvina to the Pripyat, along the front, and up to 600 km, from the Dnieper to the Vistula and Narev, in depth. Engaged in the operation were 2.4 million people, 36,400 guns and mortars, 5,200 tanks and self-propelled guns and 5,300 combat aircraft. Soviet troops had an edge over the enemy in personnel by a factor of two, artillery and aviation by a factor of four, tanks and self-propelled guns nearly by a factor of six. The troops at the front were assisted by actions of Byelorussian partisans in the enemy rear. To support the offensive, they paralyzed the functioning of railroads



Decisive Battles of the Red Army in 1944

running supplies to the key sectors of the German defense.

The powerful and decisive thrust of Soviet troops penetrated the enemy defense lines and smashed one of the major forces of the Wehrmacht, Army Group Center. On July 3, a Red Banner was hoisted over Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, and by the end of July the Germans were driven out of the entire republic and also part of Latvia and Lithuania and the eastern regions of Poland. The Polish 1st Army took part in the operation side by side with the Soviet troops.

The battles for Byelorussia resulted in over half a million German troops killed, wounded and taken prisoner. On July 17, 1944, 57,600 POWs were convoyed through the central streets of Moscow. Nazi generals walked at the head of the procession.

145 officers and men of the 1st Byelorussian Front were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for the crossing of the Western Dvina, a crucial action in Operation Bagration. A daring feat was performed by the men of a sapper platoon commanded by Sergeant Fyodor Blokhin. They made their way to the bridge across the Western Dvina in Vitebsk, which was still in the hands of the enemy, eliminated the outposts guarding the bridge and prevented the enemy from blowing it up, making it possible for Soviet tanks to use the bridge during the attack.

Exceptional courage and dedication was shown by the 19-year-old Sergeant Yuri Smirnov. On the night of June 24, when breaking through enemy defenses on the Orsha sector, a tank-borne advance party to which Yuri belonged burst into the enemy defenses. In the fierce battle for the village of Shalashino during a German counterattack, he was severely wounded and captured by the Nazis. They brutally tortured him, seeking valuable information about the direction and strength of the Soviet attack. He refused to speak, and the Nazis crucified him on the wall of a dug-out. Posthumously, he was made Hero of the Soviet Union.

The successes of Soviet troops in Byelorussia paved the way for an offensive by the 1st Ukrainian Front commanded by Marshal I.S. Konev. In July and August, developing the offensive in the Lvov-Sandomir direction, they dealt a crushing blow to a large enemy force brought together in Group North Ukraine. Soviet troops liberated the western

regions of the Ukraine and the south-eastern part of Poland and captured a large bridgehead on the western bank of the Vistula in the vicinity of Sandomir. The Soviet army had reached the Carpathians.

Following the defeat of German troops in Byelorussia the Red Army, assisted by the Baltic Fleet, proceeded to drive the enemy out of the Baltic republics. In the course of the offensive, it routed Army Group North trapping 33 of its divisions on the shore of Kurland. The Germans were thrust out of Estonia, Lithuania and the larger part of Latvia.

October and early November witnessed a powerful blow by the Red Army against Wehrmacht troops at the extreme northern flank of the Soviet-German front. The Karelian Front commanded by General K.A. Meretskov, supported by the Northern Fleet under Admiral A.G. Golovko, routed the 20th German Mountaineer Army, clearing the Soviet Arctic regions and entering Norway.

The chief military and political result of the 1944 Soviet offensive was the complete liberation of the Soviet territory from the Nazi invaders. The state frontier of the USSR was restored along its entire length from the Barents to the Black Sea. In the course of the offensive the Red Army routed the principal enemy groupings.

Nazi Germany lost almost all its allies and found itself in political isolation. The battle front drew closer to the border of Germany and crossed it in East Prussia.

Combat operations now being waged outside the Soviet Union, the Red Army began to fulfil its liberation mission in the rest of Europe.

Coming to the Aid of European Nations

As they drove the enemy from Soviet soil, the men of the Red Army saw the devastation and atrocities perpetrated by the invaders in Soviet towns and villages. The Nazis implemented a policy of mass annihilation of the Soviet people, plunder of the country and destruction of everything that could not be taken to Germany. In other European countries they had occupied the Nazis established a regime of brutal terror and massacre of people. They set up a

network of monstrous "factories of death", concentration camps equipped with gas chambers and other means of mass destruction. Buchenwald, Dachau, Maidanek, Oswieçim, Sachsenhausen are only a few of the gruesome names. There, several million people perished, among them a great number of Soviet citizens, many Jews among them, and also Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and German anti-fascists.

Millions of people in Europe who suffered under the Nazi occupation and members of the Resistance were impatiently awaiting the Red Army.

The Liberation Mission of the Red Army in South-Eastern Europe

The objectives of the Red Army in the campaign in Western Europe were aptly expressed.

The statement issued by the Soviet Government on the occasion of the Red Army's entry into Romania read: "The Soviet Government declares that it does not pursue the goal of acquiring any part of Romanian territory or changing the existing social system in Romania, and that the entering of Romania by Soviet troops has been prompted solely by military necessity and the continuing resistance of the enemy forces."

Similar statements were made with reference to the other countries which the Red Army entered.

Romania was the first country which the Red Army entered. In March 1944, in the course of fighting for the Right-Bank Ukraine, Soviet troops, pursuing the enemy, crossed the Romanian border and advanced over a hundred kilometers into the country. By mid-April, they had liberated a number of its north-eastern regions. The liberation was completed as a result of the Jassy-Kishinev Operation carried out in August 1944 by the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts under Generals R.Y. Malinovsky and F.I. Tolbukhin. Having broken through the strong enemy defense lines north-west of Jassy and south of Bendery and developing the offensive along converging lines, the two fronts reached the River Prut and closed the encirclement around the main force of Army Group South Ukraine. Fierce attempts by German troops to break out of the trap were in vain. Within 10 days 22 German divisions and the bulk of the Romanian divisions were routed

completely, and 208,600 officers and men were taken prisoner. The enemy lost 3,500 guns and mortars, 800 tanks and assault guns, and over 300 aircraft. As a result of the operation and the subsequent offensive, Soviet troops advanced 750 km.

Taking advantage of the successes scored by the Red Army, the patriotic forces inside Romania led by the Communist Party overthrew the military-fascist dictatorship. The new Romanian government declared war on Germany. On August 31, units of the 3rd Ukrainian Front entered Bucharest, already liberated. Marching side by side with them was the Tudor Vladimirescu 1st Romanian Volunteer Division which had been formed in the USSR on the initiative of Romanian patriots.

With Soviet troops reaching the Romanian-Bulgarian border, the situation in Bulgaria changed dramatically. The country's monarchist-fascist regime had been Nazi Germany's ally throughout the war, cruelly suppressing the democratic liberation movements inside the country. With the approach of the Red Army the popular struggle acquired a sharper edge. The Soviet Union decided to come to the aid of the Bulgarian people, and on September 8 troops of the 3rd Ukrainian Front crossed the Bulgarian border. At the same time, warships of the Black Sea Fleet dropped anchor in the country's ports. The Bulgarian army offered no resistance, and the people welcomed the Red Army as their savior. On September 9, an armed uprising began under the leadership of the Bulgarian Labor Party, which overthrew the monarchist-fascist dictatorship and established a popular Government of the Fatherland Front. Bulgaria broke relations with Germany and joined in the war on the Allied side. The reorganized Bulgarian army and the 3rd Ukrainian Front fought side by side against the Nazis right up to the end of the war.

As Soviet troops advanced deeper into the Balkan Peninsula, an opportunity presented itself to extend direct military aid to Yugoslavia in its struggle against Nazi invaders waged since 1941. In mid-September 1944, the Soviet Government and the National Liberation Committee of Yugoslavia signed an agreement on collaboration between the Red Army and the National Liberation Army. Under the agreement, troops of the 3rd Ukrainian Front

crossed the Yugoslav border on September 28, 1944 and, in conjunction with the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, launched an offensive aimed at liberating the country's eastern regions and its capital, Belgrade. Suppressing the stubborn resistance of the enemy, forcing rivers on the march, the advancing troops reached the southern suburbs of Belgrade on October 14. The battle for the capital lasted for a week and was exceptionally hard. In order to avoid unnecessary destruction and human losses, the Soviet command limited the use of heavy artillery in street fighting and immediately ordered the defusing of mines and bombs. On the night of October 20, Soviet and Yugoslav units supported by the Danube Flotilla stormed the Kalemegdan citadel, the last Nazi stronghold in Belgrade. South-east of Belgrade, Bulgarian units took part in the liberation action together with Soviet and Yugoslav troops.

The victories of Soviet troops in the Balkans encouraged more decisive popular action in Albania and Greece. In late November 1944, the National Liberation Army of Albania drove the enemy from the country. In the same month, the People's Liberation Army of Greece and partisans completely cleared the Greek territory of the enemy.

Bitter and prolonged fighting took place in Hungary. Against the wish of the nation, the pro-fascist government had declared itself Hitler's ally in the campaign against the Soviet Union. In the course of the war, dissatisfaction with and opposition to the fascist regime mounted. Active anti-fascist groups and partisan units operated under harsh conditions. In May 1944, a united Hungarian front was established on the initiative of the Communist Party.

Soviet troops entered Hungary in September 1944 after the enemy was routed in Romania. After the withdrawal of Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland from the Axis, Horthy's Hungary remained the only ally of Germany in Europe, and the Nazi High Command spared no effort to hold on to its positions in that country. The enemy put up a stubborn resistance to the Red Army.

In October 1944, advancing on the Budapest sector, the 2nd Ukrainian Front in collaboration with Romanian armies carried out the Debrecen Operation, which resulted in the liberation of a large part of Hungary. On October

29, the 2nd and, later, 3rd Ukrainian Fronts launched the Budapest Operation. Fighting their way along converging lines, they completed the encirclement of the 188,000-strong enemy force in the Budapest area at the end of December. The Soviet officers sent out calling for surrender were killed by the Nazis. In a stubborn fighting, the enemy resistance was finally overcome in mid-February.

The fascist regime in Hungary collapsed under the blows of the Red Army. On December 22, a Provisional Government of Hungary was formed in Debrecen and announced the country's withdrawal from the war as a German ally.

The Nazi High Command refused to put up with the loss of Hungary. In early March, in the vicinity of Lake Balaton, it amassed a large force incorporating the 6th SS Panzer Army transferred from the west and a number of panzer and infantry divisions, a total strength of over 430,000 men. It promptly launched a counteroffensive. The 3rd Ukrainian Front in conjunction with the 1st Bulgarian and 3rd Yugoslav Armies fought fiercely for 10 days to repulse the German counteroffensive with enormous losses for the enemy, and, giving him no chance to dig in, assumed the offensive. On April 4 Hungary was completely cleared of Nazi invaders.

In Nazi-occupied Austria, the enemy put up a stubborn resistance to the Red Army, but failed to check its advance. Between March 16 and April 15, 1945 the 3rd and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts carried out the Vienna Operation, routed the German forces, and on April 13 took Vienna by storm. A substantial part of the country had been liberated. In the west, Austria was entered by Anglo-American troops. On April 27, 1945, a Provisional Government of Austria was set up. The sovereignty of the country, once the first victim to the aggressor, was thus restored.

On the Main Direction

The liberation of Poland was a major part of the Soviet offensive. It began in July 1944, when in the course of the Byelorussian Operation Soviet troops and the 1st Polish Army entered Poland and reached the approaches to Warsaw.

The battles for Poland went on for over 8 months. One of the first stages along with the Byelorussian was the

Lvov-Sandomir Operation in which the 1st Ukrainian Front liberated a quarter of Polish territory and captured an important bridgehead on the west bank of the Vistula.

In Poland, as elsewhere, the fighting witnessed courage and self-sacrifice by Soviet soldiers. In the battle for the Polish village of Gerasimovici, Bialystok Region, in July 1944, a unit was stopped by a withering small arms and machine-gun fire. At the critical moment, Corporal Grigori Kunavin rushed forward and threw himself against an enemy machine gun, covering the firing slit of the pillbox with his body. In the lull that ensued his comrades burst into attack and drove the enemy out of the village. Grigori Kunavin was posthumously made Hero of the Soviet Union. He was entered into the list of honorary citizens of Gerasimovici.

The liberation of Poland was completed in the Vistula-Oder Operation (January 12-February 3, 1945). The operation was carried out by the 1st Byelorussian and the 1st Ukrainian Fronts under Marshals Zhukov and Konev, a total of 2.2 million men, 33,500 guns and mortars, over 7,000 tanks and self-propelled guns and 5,000 aircraft. In line against them stood a 560,000-strong German force with about 5,000 guns and mortars, over 1,200 tanks and assault guns and over 600 aircraft.

The beginning of the operation was scheduled for January 20. However, despite extremely unfavorable weather, it had to be launched 8 days earlier on request from the Allies, whose troops found themselves in trouble in the vicinity of the Ardennes.

The offensive spanned more than 500 km. Using the west-bank Vistula bridgeheads Soviet troops breached the powerful enemy defense lines by a series of mighty blows, their mobile units gained strategic freedom and sped to the west. On January 17 Red Army troops and the 1st Polish Army liberated Warsaw.

Tank and motorized units and formations pursued the enemy day and night. In the course of the offensive, the 1st Byelorussian Front encircled the Poznan and the Schneidemühl German army groups and, in late January, crossed the Oder and captured bridgeheads on German territory. Just as successful were the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front, which reached the Oder along a 200-km line and

established bridgeheads on its west bank.

It took the Red Army a little over three weeks to smash the enemy defenses between the Vistula and the Oder. In that time they advanced 500 km. 35 enemy divisions were destroyed, and 25 lost 70 percent of their personnel.

This major defeat forced the German command to transfer 29 divisions, 4 brigades and a substantial amount of weaponry into this sector of attack from other sectors of the Soviet-German front, from the Western and Italian fronts, and from the reserve force. The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill wrote to Stalin on January 27, 1945: "We are spellbound by your glorious victories over the common foe and by the mighty forces you have brought into line against them. Accept our warmest thanks and congratulations on historic deeds."

The action moved to German territory. Soviet troops reached the approaches to Berlin. Only 60 km now separated them from the German capital.

The main outcome of the Vistula-Oder Operation was the complete liberation of Poland from Nazi invaders. The Polish government wrote in a telegram to Moscow: "The Polish people will never forget that they have received freedom and the chance to restore their independent statehood thanks to the brilliant victories of Soviet arms and the blood shed abundantly by the heroic Soviet soldiers."

In a series of offensive operations the Nazis were driven out of Czechoslovakia. In April 1944, Soviet troops came close to the Czechoslovak border. Under the impact of the Red Army's victories, anti-fascist struggle headed by Communists was stepped up in the country. This was particularly notable in Slovakia. The Soviet Union rendered this struggle effective aid. Under the agreement signed with the Czechoslovak government (at that time in London) in the summer of 1944 Soviet and Czechoslovak partisan detachments were airlifted to Slovakia. Jointly with local guerrilla units they launched large-scale combat operations against the invaders and quislings. By the end of August, this mass liberation campaign had grown into a popular uprising in Slovakia. The Nazis moved in large forces, including two panzer divisions, to suppress it. The insurgents found themselves in an extremely precarious situation.

On the request of Czechoslovak patriots reinforcements consisting of a number of Czechoslovak units formed in the USSR, Soviet partisan detachments and weaponry were airlifted to the area of the uprising.

Simultaneously, in order to help the insurgents, the Soviet command hastily launched the Carpathian-Dukla Operation. Throughout October and November, the 1st and 4th Ukrainian Fronts fought hard in the forest-covered mountains suppressing the stubborn resistance of the enemy. The 1st Czechoslovak Corps fought alongside the Soviet troops. On October 6, in conjunction with the 38th Army, it captured the Dukla Pass and entered its native land. By late October, the advancing troops had crossed the Eastern Carpathians and liberated the Transcarpathian Ukraine and part of eastern Slovakia. But they failed to link up with the insurgent army. However, the offensive facilitated the position of the insurgents. Unable to stand their ground against the superior forces of the enemy, they retreated to the mountains and dug in there.

Decisive action towards the liberation of Czechoslovakia took place in 1945. Attacking along a broad front, the 2nd and 4th Ukrainian Fronts advanced 350 km in January-April, driving the Germans from large territories.

The final stage was the Prague Operation conducted by the 1st and 4th Ukrainian Fronts. On May 5, an uprising against the Nazi invaders flared up in Prague. The insurgents appealed to the Soviet command for help. Soviet mobile units sped to Prague from the north and the east. They suppressed the resistance of the German Army Groups Center and Austria stationed in Czechoslovakia. On May 9, the city was cleared of invaders with active support of Prague citizens. To honor the memory of Soviet tankmen who were the first to burst into Prague, a Soviet tank was mounted on a pedestal in one of the city squares.

In bloody battles in which hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers perished, the Red Army fulfilled its mission saving the peoples of many countries from Nazi slavery. In Belgrade, Budapest, Bucharest, Warsaw, Sofia, Vienna and in many other towns and villages, monuments and memorials have been erected in honor of the Soviet soldiers who had liberated them.

The Finale

In early 1945 it was already clear to everyone that the days of the Third Reich were numbered. But the Nazi leadership continued the war with the desperation of the condemned. They hoped to sow dissent among the Allies and, using this, sign a separate peace treaty on advantageous terms. However, these calculations proved vain.

In February 1945, the Crimean Conference of the three Great Powers was held in Yalta. The states were represented by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, who coordinated plans for a complete defeat of Nazi Germany, discussed the terms of its capitulation, and mapped out a course of action with respect to militarist Japan. A decision was made to set up the United Nations Organization after the war.

The Red Army continued its arduous campaign against the Wehrmacht. In January-April the 2nd and 3rd Byelorussian Fronts in conjunction with part of the 1st Baltic Front and the Baltic Fleet carried out the East Prussian Operation smashing a large group of enemy forces. On April 9, Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) was taken by storm; in February-March, Soviet troops routed German forces in Eastern Pomerania thus removing the threat of a flank strike from the north at the troops preparing an assault on Berlin. The tide of the Soviet offensive was inexorably approaching the capital. The aggressor was about to reap the worldwind.

The Storming of Berlin and the German Surrender

The Nazi command was hastily reinforcing Berlin with the stress on the eastern approaches to it. Powerful defense lines were erected between the Oder and the city. Trenches, anti-tank ditches, dragon teeth and minefields stretched for hundreds of kilometers. The city itself was turned into a huge fortress. It was surrounded by three rings of defensive installations, with over 400 concrete structures as their foundation. Barricades were being built in the streets, tanks were dug in at crossroads, and pill-boxes equipped in the lower storeys of the more solid houses.

Army Groups Center and Vistula, which defended the approaches to the city, numbered one million officers and men, over 10,000 guns and mortars, 1,500 panzer and assault guns and 3,300 aircraft. In addition, within Berlin itself, over 200 Volkssturm battalions had been formed through total mobilization, with the overall strength of the garrison topping 200,000. Nazi propaganda reiterated the tales about Berlin's invincibility and about a new "secret" weapon. The leaflets showered on Soviet troops threatened: "Berlin is not far but you are never going to clap your eyes on it. Berlin has 60,000 houses, and each is a fortress where death is awaiting you."

The operation aimed at smashing the Berlin enemy forces was to be conducted by the 2nd and 1st Byelorussian and the 1st Ukrainian Fronts. Taking part in it were also the 1st and 2nd Polish Armies. The total strength of the troops was 2.5 million men, 41,600 guns and mortars, 6,250 tanks and self-propelled guns and 7,500 aircraft.

The battle for Berlin began on April 16, 1945. At dawn, thousands of guns and aircraft opened fire. Soon afterwards, infantry and tanks mounted an attack. On the bridgehead in the vicinity of Küstrin on the west bank of the Oder, 200 searchlights flared up showing the way for the attacking troops and blinding the enemy. Overcoming the stubborn resistance of German troops, Soviet units broke through enemy defenses. Particularly bitter fighting was taking place in the zone of attack of the 1st Byelorussian Front at the steep Zelow Hills which towered over the terrain. By the close of April 17, the Hills had been captured, and 2 days later the entire depth of the Oder defense line was broken through. In the meantime, troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front crossed the Neisse and, repulsing fierce counterattacks, reached the Spree on April 18, crossed it, and captured bridgeheads on the opposite bank.

These positions were used as the springboard for a direct attack on Berlin. Fighting fiercely all the way, the 1st Byelorussian Front broke through the outer, and then the inner line of fortifications and on April 21 burst into the city's north-eastern outskirts. On April 22-23, troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front fought their way through to Berlin from the south. The next day, the two fronts met at Bornsdorf in the south-east of the city, and on the



The treacherous attack by the enemy against the Soviet country



A People's Volunteer Corps unit
defending Leningrad. 1941

Parade of Soviet troops in Red Square
on November 7, 1941

In the grim autumn of 1941, when the
enemy was bursting forward, Moscow
streets sprouted anti-tank "hedgehogs"
and barricades





General Vasili Chuikov (left) at the
observation post of the 62nd Army.
Stalingrad, 1942

Street fighting in Stalingrad. 1942



In the name of the people of the United States of America, I present this scroll to the City of Stalingrad

to commemorate our admiration for its gallant defenders whose courage, fortitude, and devotion during the siege of September 13, 1942 to January 31, 1943 will inspire forever the hearts of all free people. Their glorious victory stemmed the tide of invasion and marked the turning point in the war of the Allied Nations against the forces of aggression.

May 9, 1945

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Washington, D.C.

Nazi weaponry destroyed at the approaches to Moscow, December 1941

Field Marshal Paulus taken prisoner, Stalingrad, 1943

US President Roosevelt's Scroll to Stalingrad in acknowledgement of the feat of its heroic defenders



The political instructor does not
surrender

Women pilots of the 46th Bomber
Regiment receiving a combat
assignment, Novorossiisk area, 1943



The marines fighting at the approaches
to Sevastopol, 1942



A conference of partisan commanders.
Leningrad Region. 1942



German troop and freight train blown
up by partisans. 1942

A partisan's family. Farmer Nikifor
Ridlevsky, 59, and his daughters Olga,
20, and Zinaida, 18, in a partisan
detachment. Vitebsk Region





Women and old people did not spare
themselves working for the front
In the deep rear beyond the Ural
Mountains production of weaponry
was promptly organized





At the Kursk Bulge. Repulsing a tank
attack. 1943
Crossing the Dnieper. 1943



Soviet offensive in Byelorussia. June
1944
The ruins of Minsk, the Capital of
Byelorussia. 1944



Friends congratulating the famous pilot Alexander Pokryshkin (center) on another air victory. 1944



In July 1944, 57,600 Nazi soldiers, officers and generals were convoyed along Moscow streets



Bulgarians joyfully welcoming the Red Army. 1944

The national flag of Poland has again been hoisted over Warsaw. January 1945



Young Soviet soldier Victor Zhavoronok and his commander Major Vladimir Romanenko among partisans and inhabitants of the liberated Yugoslav village of Starčevo. 1944

Victory! Soviet soldiers in Berlin

Victory Banner over Berlin



Soviet Army men in the liberated Prague



In the centre of Berlin

Shake-hands on the Elbe. April 25, 1945



Soviet seamen in the liberated Port Arthur. August 1945

Red Army Front commanders at the final stage of the Great Patriotic War. First row, left to right: Marshals of the Soviet Union I.S. Konev, A.M. Vasilevsky, G.K. Zhukov, K.K. Rokossovsky, K.A. Meretskov; second row: Marshals of the Soviet Union F.I. Tolbukhin, R.Y. Malinovsky, L.A. Govorov; Generals of the Army A.I. Yermenko, I.Kh. Bagramyan

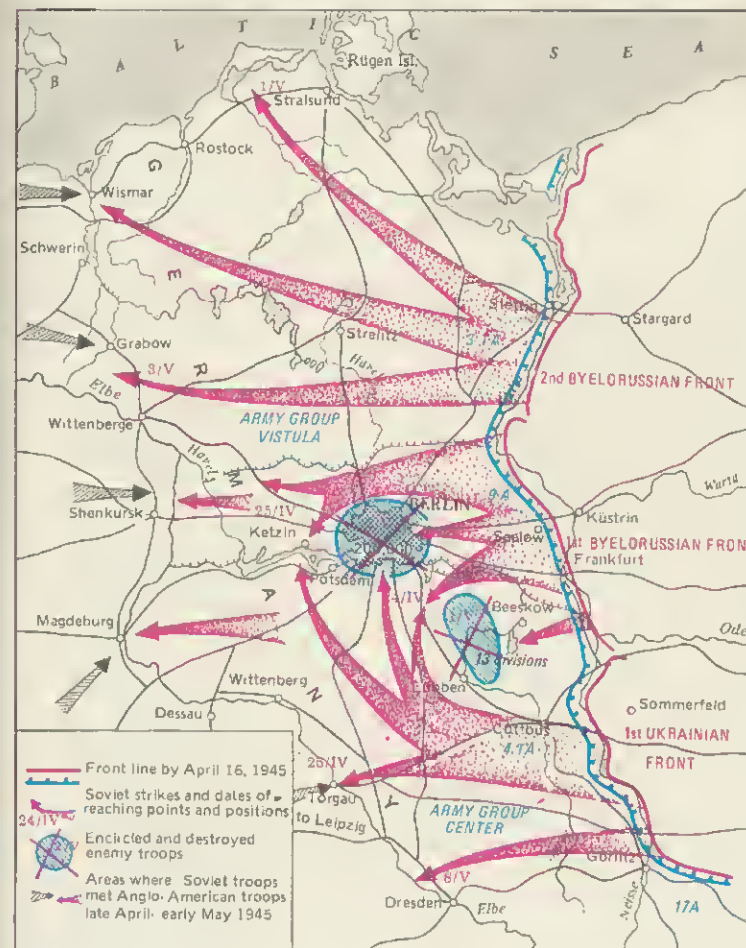
Home again



Victory salute in Moscow on May 9, 1945

25th—also in the vicinity of Potsdam. The Berlin group was encircled and cut in two. The attempt of the enemy to make their way to Berlin from the outside using the 12th Army transferred, by order from Hitler, from the Western front, was successfully foiled.

Simultaneously with the encirclement of the Berlin ene-



my forces, the 1st Ukrainian Front reached the Elbe and on April 25 established communication with the advance units of the American army in the vicinity of Torgau. Thus the entire German front was cut up into two isolated parts.

In the Stettin sector, the 2nd Byelorussian Front assumed the offensive on April 20. Smashing enemy defenses and thrusting forward they tied the enemy's hands and deprived him of the chance to transfer reserves to Berlin. On May 3-4, the Front reached the Baltic Sea coast and the Elbe and met with units of the British army.

Exceptionally bitter fighting broke out as Soviet troops routed the encircled 300,000-strong force in Berlin itself. The deeper the Soviet troops advanced into the city, the fiercer was the enemy resistance. Bloody fighting went on for each house and each storey. In these last days and hours of the war many Soviet soldiers died a hero's death. Using the previous experience of street fighting inside cities and towns, each division set up storm units—reinforced battalions and companies which had tanks, guns and flame-throwers attached to them. One by one, enemy strongholds were collapsing.

Fighting within city limits were the 3rd and 5th Shock Armies commanded by Generals V.I. Kuznetsov and N.E. Berzarin, the 8th Guards Army under General V.I. Chuikov, which had distinguished itself in Stalingrad, the 28th and 47th Armies commanded by Generals A.A. Luchinsky and F.I. Perkhovich, and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Guards Tank Armies under Generals M.Y. Katukov, S.I. Bogdanov, P.S. Rybalko and D.D. Lelyushenko. On the morning of April 30, the storming of Reichstag began. The enemy fought desperately. At night, under cover of artillery fire, Soviet soldiers burst into the building. Red flags were hoisted over its various sections, but the fighting continued. Early in the morning of May 1, Mikhail Yegorov and Meliton Kantaria hoisted the Victory Banner on the top of the Reichstag. Along with many other participants in the fighting they were made Heroes of the Soviet Union.

Chief of the German General Staff General Krebs arrived at the Soviet HQ on May 1 offering an armistice, but the Soviet command would accept nothing but unconditional surrender. On May 2, the Berlin garrison capitulated. In the course of the Berlin operation, 93 divisions of the

Wehrmacht were destroyed, about 480,000 officers and men taken prisoner, and large amounts of weaponry captured. The casualties on the Soviet side were also great. Between April 16 and May 8, the 1st and 2nd Byelorussian and the 1st Ukrainian Fronts lost 102,000 men, and also 1,220 guns, 2,156 tanks and self-propelled guns and 527 aircraft.

Over 600 participants in the fighting were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, many were decorated with orders and medals. Over a million soldiers were decorated with the medal "For the Capture of Berlin".

Fierce fighting continued on German territory for a few more days; it ended with a complete routing of the Nazi army.

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against Nazi invaders, which had lasted for 1,418 long days, thus ended in a historic victory of the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces. At midnight on May 8, in Berlin's Karlshorst suburb, representatives of the German command signed the unconditional surrender instrument. It was accepted by the representative of the Soviet Supreme Command Marshal Zhukov and representatives of the Allied Command.

The Soviet Union declared May 9 a national holiday, Victory Day. The USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium inaugurated the medal "For the Victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945". Nearly 15 million participants in the war were decorated with it.

A Victory Parade was held in Moscow in Red Square on June 24. Composite regiments of the Fronts marched past Lenin's Mausoleum under their combat banners, with the Victory Banner at the head of the procession.

In July and early August, leaders of the USSR, the USA and Great Britain held a conference in Potsdam which passed decisions on Germany's demilitarization and denazification, on the abolition of German monopolies, on reparations, and on Poland's western borders. The Conference confirmed the handing over of Königsberg and the adjacent regions to the USSR. Responding to the appeal of the Allies, the USSR confirmed its readiness to act on the previously assumed commitment to enter into the war against Japan.

The Routing of Japanese Militarism

The war in Europe was over, but on the Asian continent combat operation went on. There, the last German ally, Japan, was waging operations against the USA, Britain, China and some other states.

Japan adopted a hostile stand towards the USSR and, as an ally of Nazi Germany, extended aid to the latter in its campaign against the Soviet Union. Japanese militarists kept large forces along Soviet borders and awaited the circumstances that would allow them to strike at the USSR from the east. Japan provoked frontier incidents, hampered Soviet navigation, and supplied Nazi Germany with information about the military and economic potential of the USSR in the Far East, Siberia and the Urals. The Soviet Union had to keep large land, air and naval forces in the Far East at a time when it desperately needed them on the Soviet-German front.

On August 9, 1945, fulfilling its allied commitments assumed at the Yalta and confirmed at the Potsdam conference, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan. What motivated it was the wish to bring the Second World War to an early conclusion, to extend assistance to the peoples of Asia in their struggle against Japanese militarism, and to attain security of its eastern borders.

Lined up against the Red Army in the Far East was a large group of Japanese forces, the Kwantung Army, which numbered over a million personnel and had over 1,200 tanks, 6,640 guns and mortars, 1,907 combat aircraft and 26 vessels. Preparing the operation, the Soviet command carried out, promptly and under conditions of strictest secrecy, a redislocation from the west to the east of a large number of formations, especially mobile ones. All in all, by the beginning of hostilities, the Soviet command deployed over 1,7 million men, about 30,000 guns and mortars, 5,300 tanks and self-propelled guns, 5,200 warplanes and over 90 warships. Three fronts had been formed, the Transbaikal and the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern Fronts under Marshals R.Y. Malinovsky and K.A. Meretskov and General M.A. Purkayev. Their actions were supported by the Pacific Fleet (Admiral I.S. Yumashev) and the Amur Flotilla (Admiral N.V. Antonov). The Commander-in-Chief of

the Soviet Forces in the Far East was Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky.

The concept of the strategic operation was to cut up the main forces of the Japanese Kwantung Army by concentric blows from the Transbaikal Region, the Amur Region and the Maritime Region, and to encircle and destroy the enemy forces in Manchuria and Korea piecemeal.

The Manchurian offensive operation of Soviet troops began on August 9 by simultaneous actions of the three fronts. The Transbaikal Front assumed the offensive from the Mongolian People's Republic in the general direction of Mukden and Chanchun. On its southern flank it incorporated the troops of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army. The Front had to attack across an arid desert and the Greater Khingan Ridge, an area extremely difficult of access. In the few passes there were in the Ridge, the Japanese had erected a large number of concrete structures. The situation was further complicated by the rainy season and spells of heat reaching 30°C.

Breaking through the enemy deliberate defenses by a series of powerful blows, the troops made a dash across the desert and the ridge, and descended upon the Japanese army in central Manchuria. Most spectacular action was demonstrated by the Mechanized Cavalry Group of Soviet-Mongolian forces under General I.A. Pliyev. In 6 days, suppressing fierce resistance of enemy strongholds, the troops advanced 400-450 km and threatened the deep rear of the Kwantung Army.

The 1st Far Eastern Front, which advanced from the Maritime Region, dealt blows in the direction of Harbin and Girin. It covered 180 km in 6 days moving to link up with the Transbaikal Front. The Japanese army's avenues of retreat to the south were blocked. Having forced the Amur and the Ussury, both major rivers, the 2nd Far Eastern Front struck in the direction of Harbin and Tsi-tsikar, and cut up the enemy front into isolated parts. A week sufficed to seal the fate of the Japanese forces in Manchuria.

Developing the rapid offensive, mobile units of the Soviet fronts and airborne units dropped in the enemy rear took Harbin on August 18, Mukden, Chanchun and Girin on August 19, and Port Arthur and Dalny on August

22. In the meantime, the Pacific Fleet executed a number of troop landing operations on South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, and also on the eastern coast of North Korea. Korean partisans took part in the liberation of their homeland.

In the 23 days of heavy fighting, the Kwantung Army was routed. North-eastern China and North Korea were cleared of Japanese invaders, and South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, traditional Russian territory, were returned to the Soviet Union.

Having sustained this crushing defeat, Japan was forced, on September 2, to sign an unconditional surrender instrument. The Second World War was over. At long last, peace was restored throughout the world.

The Soviet Union and its Armed Forces played the decisive role in bringing about victory over Nazi Germany and, in the final stage of the war, militarist Japan, liberating a number of nations of Europe and Asia. The leadership of the Communist Party of China wrote at that time: "The Red Army has come to the aid of the Chinese people in driving out the aggressor. This is an unprecedented occurrence in the history of China. The impact of this event cannot be overestimated." The message of the Korean people to the Soviet Supreme Command read: "The Korean people will never forget the heroic feats performed by Soviet soldiers, they will be narrated from generation to generation as wonderful tales forever evoking warm feelings of affection and gratitude towards the Soviet Army."

By routing the Kwantung Army, the Red Army speeded up the end of the war in the east and saved hundreds of thousands of American, British, Chinese and other soldiers, who would have been sure to die had the war in the Pacific and the Far East continued. It had also spared the peoples of Asian countries, including Japan, untold suffering and losses.

Political leaders in the USA and Britain assessed highly the significance of the Soviet Armed Forces' victory over Japanese militarism. The US Air Force Commander in China General Claire Chennault stated in August 1945: "Russia's entry into the Japanese war was the decisive factor in speeding up its end and would have been so even if no

atomic bombs had been dropped."

Japan's capitulation and the end of the war in the Far East created favorable conditions for the struggle of the peoples of China, Korea and other East and South-East Asian nations for their freedom and independence. The forces of democracy and progress consolidated their positions throughout the Asian continent. With the support and assistance of the Soviet Union, the struggle of the Chinese people culminated in the victory of the popular democratic revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The national liberation movements in Vietnam, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and India, which had launched the struggle for national independence, gathered momentum.

The Soviet Union put a high value on the achievement of the participants in the Far Eastern campaign. All were decorated with the medal "For the Victory over Japan". Over 300,000 officers and men were decorated with orders and medals, and those who distinguished themselves most were made Heroes of the Soviet Union.

A Historic Victory

The Decisive Contribution of the Soviet Union

Every passing year increases the distance that separates us from the events of the Great Patriotic War. But time only serves to highlight the significance of what was achieved by the Soviet people and its Armed Forces. The victory in that harshest and bloodiest of all wars was the decisive condition of peace and of life itself on the Earth. To a large extent, the credit for the removal of the fascist threat and reinstating freedom goes to the first socialist state in the world, which succeeded in routing the grim forces of Nazism.

The victory was achieved jointly by the countries of the anti-fascist coalition and the Resistance fighters in the Nazi-occupied territories. A major part was played by the people and armies of the USA, Great Britain, France and also the other countries who pooled their efforts to rout

¹ *The New York Times*, August 15, 1945.

the aggressor. The Soviet people have always highly valued the efforts of their allies in the struggle against fascism and militarism, and paid a tribute of respect to those who shed their blood and died for the victory. From the very outset of the war, the people of Yugoslavia and their National Liberation Army rose against the invaders. Similar staunchness was displayed by the Wojsko Polskie and the Czechoslovak Army, and, in the final stages of the war, by the armed forces of Bulgaria and Romania and by Hungarian units. An important contribution to the defeat of Nazism was made by the partisan and underground Resistance movement, in which Communists were the staunchest fighters.

However, it is an important historical fact that the brunt of the war was borne by the Soviet people and their Armed Forces. The USSR proved itself as the principal obstacle to world domination of Nazi Germany. For almost 4 years, throughout the entire duration of the Great Patriotic War against fascism, the Soviet front engaged the bulk of the fascist war machinery. Operating against Soviet troops were between 190 and 270 of the battleworthiest divisions, while the Anglo-American troops had to deal with from 9 to 20 divisions in North Africa and from 7 to 26 divisions in Italy.

After the Allied landing in Normandy and the opening of the Second Front the Soviet-German front retained its decisive importance. The Red Army had to grapple with 195-240 enemy divisions, while the Western front tied up 56-75 divisions. The Armed Forces of the USSR crippled 607 divisions, the principle force of Nazi Germany and its allies, while the Anglo-American troops destroyed or took prisoner 176 divisions in Africa and Europe. Eighty percent of Germany's losses in manpower (10 million men) were sustained on the Eastern front. On its Eastern front, Germany lost three-quarters of its aircraft, the bulk of its tanks and artillery, and 2,500 battle and transport vessels.

Neither were the losses of the Soviet Union comparable to anything suffered by its allies. The USA lost 405,000, Britain—375,000, whilst 20 million Soviet citizens perished. Over 70,000 Soviet towns and villages lay in ruins. Almost 30 percent of the country's national wealth was lost.

When the Red Army was scoring its victories against the stubborn resistance of the invaders, no one, in Western countries too, had any doubt that the outcome of the struggle against fascism was being decided on the Soviet-German front. President Roosevelt wrote to General MacArthur in May 1942: "I find it difficult this spring and summer to get away from the simple fact that the Russian armies are killing more Axis personnel and destroying more Axis materiel than all the other twenty-five United Nations put together."¹ In a message to Stalin of September 27, 1944 British Prime Minister Winston Churchill wrote that "it is the Russian army that tore the guts out of the German military machine and is at the present moment holding by far the larger portion of the enemy on its front". Charles de Gaulle stated in December 1944: "The Russian effort, which dealt the knock-out blow to the German war machine, was the major condition of the liberation of our metropolitan territory."

About 7 million Soviet troops fought abroad in the battles for the liberation of Europe, and about 1.5 million, for that of Asia. The losses sustained by the Soviet army in these battles amounted to 3 million, with over a million dead.

The smashing of the Axis military machine ultimately resulted in the collapse of the entire state and political system of fascism. The ideology of fascism and militarism was uprooted.

What Made Victory Possible

The victory of the Soviet Union was a victory of an advanced socialist system over a reactionary fascist state.

The Soviet socialist system evolved such important features of the new society as community of principles and aspirations of the Communist Party and the people, a solid union of the working class, peasantry and the intelligentsia, the universal feeling of patriotism and internationalism, and the moral and political unity of the entire society. The war served to confirm the justice of Lenin's idea that the people fighting for their freedom and independence, for the Soviet system, for a just cause and for

¹ *The New York Times*, October 20, 1955.

their future are unconquerable.

A major source of the might of the Soviet Union and its army was the strong friendship and the feeling of mutual trust uniting the nations living in the country. Nazi theorists hoped that after the German invasion, strife and discord would set in among the peoples of the USSR and that the country would disintegrate as a single multinational state. But they miscalculated. The threat of foreign domination not only failed to alienate the peoples of the USSR or shake their faith in the ultimate victory but served to bring them closer together. Their friendship and cooperation made further headway in the harsh times of trial. The country's nations and nationalities fought side by side to smash the enemy.

Another powerful factor contributing to victory was the socialist economic system, public ownership of the means of production, the planned socialist economy and the truly selfless effort of people on the home front. Socialist industry and the collective farm system proved sound enough in the face of the harshest trials. The front was provided with everything necessary to rout the enemy.

The Soviet economy had a difficult job supplying the front. Nazi Germany, which had the resources of the conquered countries at its disposal, surpassed the USSR 1.5-2 times in the volume of industrial production and 2-2.5 times in basic machinery output. Early in the war, the Soviet Union lost a number of its principal industrial and agricultural regions. But thanks to the advantages of the socialist economic system and labor heroism which was a mass and daily occurrence, throughout the war the USSR produced twice as much ammunition and materiel as Nazi Germany.

The victory of the Soviet Union and its army represented the triumph of the ideology of scientific socialism over the reactionary ideology of fascism, the triumph of the ideas of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism over chauvinism and racism. The ideas developed by Lenin and the Communist Party proved a powerful source of inspiration for the army and the workers on the home front.

In the course of the war, the Red Army conducted over 50 major strategic operations and about 250 by large for-

mations, and in thousands of battles, invariably displayed great staunchness in defense and resolution and maneuverability in attack. Soviet offensives were steadily gaining in scope and showed competent choice of the direction of the main thrust, skilful concentration of manpower and equipment along the principal lines of attack and in decisive areas, and originality in planning the operations.

The war highlighted the competence, talent and skill of many Soviet commanders, political officers and generals. The most outstanding victories of the Great Patriotic War are associated with the names of G. Zhukov, A. Vasilevsky, S. Timoshenko, S. Budyonny, K. Voroshilov, B. Shaposhnikov, A. Antonov, I. Bagramyan, N. Vatutin, N. Voronov, L. Govorov, A. Golovko, A. Yeryomenko, I. Konev, N. Kuznetsov, R. Malinovsky, K. Meretskov, A. Novikov, F. Oktyabrsky, I. Petrov, K. Rokossovsky, F. Tolbukhin, V. Tributs, I. Chernyakhovsky and others. Throughout the war, Supreme Commander Joseph Stalin headed military operations.

Over 7 million servicemen were decorated with orders and medals of the USSR, over 11,000 awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, 104 of them twice, the pilots Ivan Kozhedub and Alexander Pokryshkin and Marshal Georgi Zhukov, an outstanding Soviet military leader — four times. Twelve Soviet cities were awarded the title of Hero City: Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk, Odessa, Sevastopol, Stalingrad, Novorossiisk, Kerch, Tula, Murmansk, Smolensk, and the Brest Fortress.

Proof of the Soviet people's awareness of their civic responsibility was provided by the partisan movement in the enemy rear. Soviet partisans and underground resistance fighters dealt numerous lethal blows at the enemy, foiled the military, political and economic plans and projects of the occupation authorities, promoted the success of the Red Army, and conducted extensive political work among the population of the occupied areas. In 1942, partisan units already held about 10 percent of German divisions.

No less heroic was the effort of the people working on the home front. They gave of their best, be it at a factory, a farm, a design office or a laboratory, to bring victory nearer. Over 16 million Soviet people were decorated

with the medal "For Valiant Labor in the Great Patriotic War".

A tremendous contribution to the war effort both on the battlefield and on the home front was made by women. They replaced men at factories, in transport jobs and in agriculture. Many took part in combat operations, worked at front-line and rear hospitals. Over 800,000 women served in the army, more than 80,000 of them officers.

Fighting against Nazis in the grim years of the war, the young people made it amply clear that they were ready and able to carry on the traditions of those who took part in the October Revolution. Komsomol members in particular were always in the front ranks of the fighters. There were 11 million of them in the armed forces at the time of the Great Patriotic War. Three and a half million young servicemen and 50,000 young partisans, Komsomol members were decorated with orders and medals, and 1,500 Komsomol members were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. For its outstanding contribution to the war effort, the Young Communist League (Komsomol) has been awarded the Order of Lenin. Young people working on the home front showed as much selflessness as their peers, actually taking part in combat operations.

A major condition and source of victory was the competent and inspired leadership of the Communist Party. It was a party that fought alongside the people rising to protect their independence in the face of foreign invasion.

In the prewar years, when the threat of imperialist aggression was already tangible, the Party took steps to build up the Soviet Union's defense potential. The country's industrialization, collectivization of agriculture and scientific and cultural advances paved the way for strengthening the battle capacity of the Soviet Armed Forces. An important factor was the growing ideological and political unity of Soviet society and the friendship among the nations living in the USSR. The policy of peace and cooperation vigorously pursued by the Party and government in the world arena facilitated the establishment of an anti-Hitler coalition and the pooling of efforts of a number of states in the struggle against Nazism.

Early in the war, the Communist Party worked out a detailed and effective plan of action, helped redirect the

economy and the whole tenor of life along wartime tracks, ensured priority development of the defense industry so that the army would get everything it needed, and organized the training of reserves.

The leading body of the Party, its Central Committee, was a national headquarters, both military and economic. It settled all the major issues involved in the management of state affairs and the conduct of the war. The General Headquarters exercised strategic control over the actions of the Fronts and the entire Armed Forces. The State Defense Committee was in charge of economic activities and of raising manpower and a military equipment. The Party was that body of men to whom the people looked for guidance and inspiration in their work towards victory.

About one-third of the Central Committee members as well as many other top Party personnel had joined the army. They carried out organizational, political and educational work among the troops and the resistance fighters.

Over four-fifths of Communists had either joined the army or worked in the defense industries. They were invariably to be seen leading attacks or heading partisan or resistance actions. By the end of the war, over 3 million Communists had joined the army, i.e. two-fifths of the total Party membership. Nearly three-fourths of Heroes of the Soviet Union were Communists. Three million Communists were killed in action. But their places were filled by new fighters: over the war years, 5 million Soviet people joined the Party.

The Significance of the Victory and Lessons of the War

The time that has passed since the Great Patriotic War has given us a fuller and more accurate idea of the world-historic significance of the Soviet people's victory. The Soviet people and their army protected their independence and freedom and secured the continued existence of the first socialist state in the world. The victory highlighted the considerable advantages of socialism and its great economic and socio-political potential, and confirmed the soundness of Marxism-Leninism. The victory gave the people an opportunity to return to peaceful labor.

The routing of German fascism and Japanese militarism has had a profound impact on the overall course of human history. The defeat of the more reactionary section of imperialism further weakened the capitalist system and aggravated the crisis of world capitalism. In a number of European and Asian states, people have overthrown the exploiter regimes and started building a new life. The world socialist system has evolved, by now becoming a prime mover of historical progress.

The routing of Nazism and militarism prompted a fresh upsurge in the international working class and communist movement and the struggle of peoples for their social and national liberation. National liberation revolutions have dealt a lethal blow to the colonial system of imperialism. Dozens of young independent states have been formed. Some of them chose a non-capitalist way of development. The alignment of forces in world politics has changed in favor of socialism, progress, democracy and peace.

The victory of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War showed that nothing can reverse the course of history and quench the powerful flood of revolutionary change released by the October Revolution. This main outcome of the war is a warning to aggressors, and a harsh lesson of history which must not be forgotten.

The war has shown once again, and very convincingly indeed, that the imperialist quarters' plans for world domination are futile. The Soviet Union and its army rose as a formidable obstacle in the way of Nazism's attempt to conquer the world. The imperialist claims of modern pretenders to world domination are opposed by the powerful world socialist community, the working class and Communist movements, the peoples of the newly free countries and mass democratic movements the world over.

But even this has not removed the threat of a new conflagration. This threat is created by imperialism—guilty of two world wars that cost the humankind tens of millions lives. The most reactionary imperialist circles, above all, in the USA and NATO focus their policies, in the solution of international problems, on the diktat and pressure by force and strive to achieve military superiority over the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation through wide-scale militarist preparations, and thus ensure for

themselves the possibility to dispose of the peoples' destinies.

History has made it clear that to protect peace and prevent a devastating nuclear war, all peaceful forces must pool efforts in the campaign against the aggressive course pursued by imperialism. It is necessary to enhance the people's political awareness and protect and build up the achievements of social progress and democracy. The principal lesson of the last war is that war must be stopped before it has begun.

THE POSTWAR YEARS

*Demobilizing the Army and Shifting to a Peacetime Economy * Peaceful Labor and the Peace Policy of the Soviet State * Imperialism Steps Up the Arms Race in Preparation for a Nuclear War * Vigilance and Readiness to Rebuff Aggression*

Facing a New Danger

Despite the enormous material damage and human losses inflicted on the Soviet Union by the war, the country emerged politically more powerful: the Soviet nations and nationalities became more closely bonded, unity of the Party and the people grew, and the international prestige of the Soviet Union and its influence on international affairs increased.

But the war had dealt the country's economy an extremely severe blow. Its fuel and energy base and transport system were damaged, and the production of consumer goods dropped sharply. The productive forces in agriculture were seriously undermined. The Soviet Union was in desperate need of food, raw materials, fuel, electric power and housing.

The nation's most urgent task was to shift to a peace economy, restore it and develop, and the people exhibited the same selflessness with which they had fought in the war in seeking to accomplish this goal.

The peaceful effort was to a large extent promoted by the millions of men and women who had returned from active military service. Experienced in battle, former soldiers worked in virtually all branches of the economy: at factories and farms, in the transport system, in construction tackling complex and difficult tasks of the postwar economic development, in coal mines and collective farms.

Headed by the Communist Party, the Soviet people scored another victory, this time on a peaceful front of labour:

they met the challenging targets of the 4th Five-Year Plan (1946-1950), which provided for the restoration of the national economy ahead of schedule. The people's effort made it possible to attain the prewar level of industrial production in three years, and five years sufficed to restore and even expand the material and technical base of agriculture. Over 6,000 large factories were restored, built and commissioned in that period, nearly as much as in the first and second five-year periods taken together.

Having healed within a fairly short period of time the heavy wounds inflicted by the war, the Soviet Union substantially consolidated its economic, scientific and technological, and defense potential, and strengthened its international positions. Socialism in the USSR has won completely and finally. On the basis of what had been accomplished, Soviet society continued confidently to make headway in all directions of economic, socio-political and cultural development, and industrial and agricultural production proceeded to expand at a high rate.

Probably the greatest advances were made in the fields of science and technology. Soviet scientists were the first to develop ways of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In 1954 the Soviet Union commissioned the first atomic power station, and in 1957 the first atomic-powered ice-breaker *Lenin* was launched.

Scientific and technological advances have secured the Soviet Union's position of leadership in space exploration. The October 4, 1957 launching of the Earth's first artificial satellite and the first manned space flight on April 12, 1961, when Yuri Gagarin opened up the era of space exploration, marked two more outstanding achievements of the USSR.

The considerable industrial and scientific potential built up by the Soviet people has made it possible to successfully tackle challenging economic and social problems, maintain the country's defense capability on a high level and consolidate the Armed Forces of the USSR.

At a New Stage

The establishment of peace affected all aspects of the life and activity of the Soviet Armed Forces. The demobilization of army and navy personnel provided to be a major organizational endeavor. As early as the summer of 1945,

trainloads of older servicemen who had been transferred to the reserve left for the Soviet Union from Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and other European towns and cities. Crowds of local people came to wish the soldiers who had liberated them a warm farewell. Arriving in the Soviet Union, the men received an enthusiastic welcome from their countrymen, relatives and friends.

The state demonstrated great concern for these veterans. Each returned to his or her job or, if that proved impossible, received employment elsewhere. They were also given a grant of money and allocated the means for building housing and obtaining household goods.

Demobilization was completed by early 1948, the personnel of the Armed Forces had been reduced from 11.4 million to 2.84 million.

Taking due consideration of the international situation at that time, the Soviet Government and the Communist Party saw to it that the country's defense potential remained unimpaired. The most combatworthy and adequately equipped units and formations remained in active service. Highly trained army and naval officers with combat experience were encouraged to remain in service.

Together with demobilization, a reorganization of the Armed Forces was undertaken on the basis of the experience accumulated over the war and in conformity with the tasks to be solved in the postwar years. The military personnel was reorganized, and the troops were redeployed to areas where an adequate material base was built for systematic combat training and political education.

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from foreign countries began immediately after the end of the war. In September-November 1945 troops were withdrawn from North Norway and Czechoslovakia; in April 1946—from the Danish island of Bornholm; in May—from Manchuria and North Iran; and in 1947-1948, from Bulgaria and Korea. In 1955, the Soviet Union renounced its rights to the Porkkala Udd territory in Finland and dismantled a naval base on its coast, removed its army units and battleships from Port Arthur (China) and Austria, and in 1958—from Romania. The number of Soviet troops temporarily stationed in the territories of the GDR, Poland and Hungary under international agreements was drastically reduced.

The fact that the Soviet Armed Forces were reduced to a quarter of their size at the end of the war, the withdrawal of troops from foreign territories and other concrete steps taken by the Soviet Government reflected the peaceful essence of the USSR's foreign policy, the absence of expansionist ambitions and its goodwill towards neighboring countries.

Friendly relations and cooperation among states accorded with the interests of all nations who had reason to hope that the defeat of Nazi aggressors would remove the threat of another war and establish a lasting peace. However, international developments soon proved how vain that hope was.

The Beginning of the Cold War

The smell of bomb smoke had not yet blown away from an earth scorched by the fire of war when an alarming and dangerous situation began to develop in the world. The ruling circles of the USA, Britain and a number of other capitalist states executed an aboutface in their policy towards the USSR and the newly established socialist states. Cooperation turned to hostility, confrontation and anti-Sovietism. The cold war which was to poison the world's political climate for a long time to come, had begun.

The new policies of the USA and Britain, the two countries which initiated the cold war era, were calculated. Imperialist circles, especially in the USA, which had moved to a position of leadership in the capitalist world, did not want to reconcile themselves to the fact that the defeat of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan had drastically changed the alignment of forces in world politics in favor of the peoples fighting for social progress, democracy and national emancipation. They refused to accept the growing role of the USSR in international affairs and its independent domestic and foreign policy. Imperialist circles also began to try to impede the revolutionary changes in the world, to eliminate the achievements of world socialism and perpetuate capitalist domination.

Ruling elite in the United States openly charted a course towards world domination. In a message to Congress in 1945, Harry Truman stated: "Whether we like it or not, we must all recognize that the victory which we have won has placed upon the American people the continuing burden of

responsibility for world leadership." A report prepared at the US Joint Chiefs of Staff related that with respect to the USSR, "Our government... should press the issue to a prompt political decision while making all preparations to strike the first blow if necessary."

The US imperialists were not alone in their desire to revise the results of the Second World War and deprive the Soviet Union and the world progressive and democratic forces of the fruits of their victory. In March 1946 British ex-Prime Minister Winston Churchill made his notorious speech in Fulton in the presence of President Truman. Waving the bogey of the "Soviet military threat", Churchill urged the capitalist world to launch a military crusade against the USSR. This was the first shot fired in the cold war, which was characterized by a large-scale campaign of slander, blackmail, threats, ideological subversion and provocations against the USSR and other socialist countries.

From the very start the cold war was wide-ranging and aggressive in form. It affected political, economic and diplomatic relations, and was accompanied by a loud anti-socialist and anti-Soviet propaganda campaign. It also served to spur the arms race. Imperialist circles did their best to hamper the economic development of the Soviet Union, cripple its international positions and disrupt its relations with the socialist and developing countries. As formulated in secret Directive 20 of the US National Security Council and approved by President Truman on August 18, 1948, the objective of American policy was "to reduce the power and influence of Moscow".

The campaign of imperialist reaction proceeded in all directions. Having made preparations for an aggressive war against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, imperialist circles also stepped up their offensive against the world Communist, working class and national liberation movements and the repression of revolutionary and democratic elements in their own countries. Hypocritically claiming to be seeking to protect the "free world" from a non-existent Soviet military threat, international reactionary forces accelerated the arms race, modernized their armies and set up new military blocs and groupings. The United States was particularly energetic in these endeavors. In 1949, the US was instrumental in the establishment of the aggressive North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which united twelve countries.¹

In 1951 the states in this Anglo-American bloc signed a separate peace treaty with Japan. That same year, the USA, Australia and New Zealand set up a Pacific Pact, ANZUS. The mid-1950s witnessed the formation of military blocs in South-East Asia (SEATO) and in the Middle East (CENTO).² A chain of military bases and bridgeheads was being speedily created along the perimeter of the socialist states.

The aggressive policy of the USA, Britain and other imperialist states prompted a number of direct armed actions. In 1947-1949, the joint forces of domestic and international reaction suppressed the popular movement in Greece. In 1950 the United States unleashed a war against the Korean people creating a threat to the People's Republic of China.

Plans of Nuclear War Strategists

Since the end of the war, the US ruling circles have used nuclear blackmail as a major means of attaining political and military-strategic goals of US imperialism. After the explosion of the first atomic bomb, President Truman having in mind the Soviet Union stated: "I'll certainly have a hammer on those boys."³ General Maxwell Taylor, Chief of Staff of the US Army, wrote somewhat later: "The atomic bomb... encouraged once more the belief that an ultimate weapon was in the hands of our Air Force which would allow the United States to impose a sort of Pax-Americana on the world."⁴

US authorities have more than once used the nuclear cud-

¹ In 1949, NATO included the USA, Britain, France (which in 1966 left NATO's military organization but remained a member of its political organization), Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark, Portugal, and Ireland. Turkey and Greece were drawn into the organization in 1952, West Germany in 1955, Spain—in 1981.

² Profound internal contradictions split up SEATO in 1977 and CENTO in 1979.

³ Norman A. Graebner, *Cold War Diplomacy. American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., Toronto, London, New York, 1962, p. 22.

⁴ Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, New York, 1960, p. 12.

gel to threaten the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. There have even been appeals in the press to drop atomic bombs on Soviet cities, and US strategic bombers ready to deliver nuclear strikes made a show of force in areas adjacent to the Soviet Union. The press in the USA and some other NATO countries has written: From Baku—northwards towards Leningrad, from Smolensk—eastwards towards Novosibirsk, all vital centers of the USSR will be reduced to ashes and destroyed by the terrible fire of the nuclear weapons. And this was not a mere phraseology. The aggressive ambitions of American imperialists were reflected in the military doctrine and strategic concepts of the USA. Meanwhile under the veil of “top secrecy”, plans and scenarios for a nuclear war against the USSR were hatched. It was later discovered that back in 1946 US military strategists were working on a plan for a nuclear attack against the Soviet Union which envisioned the bombing of 20 Soviet cities. Under a plan codenamed Charioteer which was approved by President Truman in 1948, hostilities were to be opened before April 1, 1949; 133 atomic bombs were to be dropped on 70 Soviet cities in the first month of the war and another 200 nuclear bombs and 25,000 tons of conventional bombs in the next two years.

However, these plans remained on paper. The United States was not in a position to win such a war. The post-war progress of the Soviet Union allowed the country to build up its economic and defense capabilities to an extent which hindered American imperialists back. And, most important, the Soviet Union produced its own atomic bomb. The Soviet Union was now protected by an atomic shield; the USA had lost its nuclear monopoly.

The new plan for war against the USSR, which was worked out in the United States in 1949, was codenamed Dropshot.¹ It called for hitting major administrative and industrial centers, with eight atomic bombs to be dropped on Moscow, seven on Leningrad and three hundred on other Soviet cities. The atomic strike was to be followed by an offensive of US and NATO troops from the west and the south, which were supposed to destroy Soviet troops and,

¹ See: “Dropshot”, *The American Plan for World War III Against Russia in 1957*, New York, 1978, pp. 24, 243.

supported by repeated air strikes, force the USSR to surrender. The principal political objectives of the planned war were to destroy the Soviet Union, “uproot Bolshevism” and establish world domination. Washington politicians and strategists planned to divide the Soviet territory into several occupation zones: Western, Ukrainian-Caucasian, West Siberian-Urals-Turkestan, and East Siberian-Far Eastern...

However, the warmongers were once again obliged to reckon with reality: it was recognized that the USA and NATO were not yet capable of smashing the Soviet Army and crushing the Soviet Union. The date for the opening of hostilities was postponed until January 1, 1957 when, it was hoped, a coalition of countries will be knocked together for a war against the Soviet Union.

The destruction of the USSR and attainment of world supremacy through military means was the idea behind Directive NSC-68, which was drafted by the US National Security Council in 1950. The Directive stated: “We must lead in building a successfully functioning political and economic system in the free world.” The means of attaining this objective were 1) to dramatically step up the military preparations of the USA and its allies; 2) “to foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system so that the Kremlin is brought at least to the point of modifying its behaviour”, “to wage overt psychological warfare calculated to encourage mass defections from Soviet allegiance and to frustrate the Kremlin design in other ways, ... to foster a fundamental change in the nature of the Soviet system...”

Directive NSC-68 provided a guideline for American ruling circles for years to come. The arms race proceeded all along the line, especially in the sphere of nuclear weapons. The outcome was the accumulation of enormous stockpiles of weaponry. In the early 1980s, over 7,000 nuclear warheads were stationed at US military bases in Western Europe, 7,000 more on warships and depot ships of the US Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, and about 1,500 at other bases in the Pacific Ocean. In addition the United States possesses thousands of ballistic missiles and hundreds of strategic bombers as delivery vehicles.

The nuclear stockpiles accumulated by the United States are sufficient to blow up the Earth several times over. The US and other NATO countries’ stockpiles of con-

ventional armaments and the latest military equipment are also enormous. But aggressive US circles and their partners in military blocs obviously do not intend to stop.

Manipulating peace rhetoric, they in practice continue preparations for a new, above all nuclear, war, spending vast resources for this purpose. The United States alone spent over 1,000 billion dollars on military preparations in the first half of the 80s, and plans to spend almost 1,800 billion dollars in 1986-1990. A considerable share of this sum is earmarked for the modernisation of the nuclear potential, especially the strategic offensive forces.

In accordance with the wide-scale rearmament programme, new systems of strategic nuclear weapons are being developed. The deployment of new generation MX intercontinental ballistic missiles began in mid-1986. A new high-accuracy mobile Midgetman ICBM is being created. Serial production of B-1B strategic bombers has been launched, the principally new ATB strategic bomber is being designed, and rearmament of B-52 bombers with long-range cruise missiles is continued. The Navy has acquired atomic submarines of the Ohio type armed with Trident-I ballistic missiles. Work is about to be finished on the design and preparations for the deployment of Ballistic Missiles of Trident-2 submarines.

In the development of the US general purpose forces great importance is attached to building up tactical nuclear arms and modernising the means of delivery and the nuclear charge itself, with an emphasis made on increasing the offensive capability of the troops and arms. Mass production of neutron weapons is underway.

The network of US military bases and sites is being strengthened, with half a million servicemen and enormous amounts of arms, ammunition and equipment stationed there. Most of the bases are located near the borders of the USSR and other socialist community countries and are used as springboards for the preparations of aggression.

Along with the arms race continued on earth, Washington has in recent years been especially persistent in its efforts to spread it to outer space. The idea is to use a "technological breakthrough" in creating space strike weapons, including those based on the latest scientific developments, to break the existing parity and attain military superiority over the USSR.

US military personnel are subjected to intensive ideological and psychological indoctrination in the hope of instilling an aggressive anti-socialist and anti-Soviet outlook. They are brainwashed into believing in American exclusiveness and the "right of the United States to world leadership". A point is made of fostering hatred for socialism, the Soviet system and the Soviet people. The military press, films and television are used to spread fabrications about "Soviet terrorism" and the "Soviet military threat", military exercises often feature the "adversary" as dressed in Soviet military uniform and armed with Soviet-made weapons. A huge contingent is engaged in instilling and promoting anti-socialist ideas and views, ranging from commanding officers and specially appointed political "information officers" to the many thousands of chaplains.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is assigned a particularly important role in the aggressive preparations of American imperialism. Using the hypocritical slogan of "Atlantic solidarity", the USA has long been working to turn Western Europe into its principal springboard for aggression against the USSR and its allies. There, in direct proximity to the borders of the European socialist states, the largest body of US overseas land troops has been stationed. Officers and men numbering 300,000 have been equipped with the latest weaponry which are spearheaded against major administrative and industrial centers in the USSR and other Warsaw Treaty states.

A number of other NATO countries also have a considerable nuclear potential; Britain and France both possess a substantial number of medium-range nuclear missiles. These are land- and sea-based missiles and bombers capable of carrying about 600 nuclear warheads at a distance of 4,500 km. Over 5 million men in NATO countries are in active service and are supplied with the latest tanks, aircraft, artillery, anti-aircraft weapons, submarines and warships of various types.

NATO's main strike force is concentrated in West Germany, which is the most militarized region in the world. Stationed there are the troops of seven NATO countries, including the 7th Army of the USA, the British Rhine Army, and large French and Canadian army formations. Over 150 depots of nuclear weapons with almost 5,000 nuclear

warheads and large supplies of American chemical weapons are located there.

The half-a-million strong West German army, the Bundeswehr, is the largest in Western Europe and is equipped with the latest weapons and combat equipment, including tactical missiles. West German armed forces make up nearly one-half the NATO land forces in Central Europe, one-third the air force, and over two-thirds the naval force in the Baltic. In 1985 West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl stated that the Bundeswehr is the core of the West's military might in Central Europe.

Following in the wake of American aggressive policies is Japan, which is tied to the USA by a military treaty. The combat capacity of the 280,000-strong Japanese army has long surpassed the country's prewar level. There are over 140 US military bases on Japanese land, with up to 50,000 American military personnel. US nuclear submarines and other warships call at Japanese ports and feel completely at home there.

Another major US military stronghold in the Far East is South Korea, a country which has been occupied by American forces since 1945. Stationed there are 40,000 American servicemen and nearly 1,000 nuclear warheads.

Imperialism's Psychological Warfare

Material preparations for another world war are boosted by anti-Soviet and anti-socialist propaganda and psychological warfare. Propaganda services brazenly slander the Soviet system, the role of the Leninist Party and the Soviet people; the nature and purpose of the Soviet Armed Forces and the Warsaw Treaty Organization are grossly misrepresented. The special institutes, centers and services and the mass media employed by the reactionary forces have launched a series of loud anti-Soviet slander campaigns. They persist in recounting tales about the persecution of dissidents and violations of human rights in the USSR, the mounting "Soviet military threat", Soviet "military intervention" in Afghanistan, Poland, African states, the Middle East. The assistance extended by the socialist countries to liberation movements is said to encourage terrorism, etc. These well coordinated and wide-scale campaigns represent a real psychological warfare against the socialist countries.

Slander and falsehoods are mass produced and employed as the major tools of ideological subversive actions against the peoples seeking to build a new life. At present, 200 research centers in the USA and a hundred in West Germany are engaged in fabricating reactionary propaganda matter. A large number of such centers is operating in Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Forty large radio stations in the capitalist countries broadcast anti-Soviet propaganda in 27 languages spoken in the USSR. Veterans in the field are the notorious Liberty and Free Europe radio stations sponsored and financed by the CIA.

Hundreds of centers and services engaged in ideological and psychological subversion concentrated for the most part against socialist countries have chosen West Germany as their headquarters. Dozens of television relay stations have been set up along the West German-GDR border for broadcasting at the GDR and Soviet military personnel stationed there.

The psychological warfare waged by militarist circles in the USA and NATO pursues definite goals. First it is designed to discredit socialism, weaken the attraction of revolutionary ideas, denigrate the Soviet way of life and Soviet foreign policy and sow the seeds of mistrust to it. Second, the anti-Soviet hullabaloo is calculated to take the minds of the people in capitalist countries off the crises and vices inherent in the capitalist system—mass unemployment, inflation, recessions, growing cost of life, poverty, etc. Third, this campaign seeks to justify the military preparations of the USA and its NATO allies, fan up anti-Soviet sentiments throughout the world, instill the idea among the masses of the inevitability and moral expediency of a war against the USSR and the other socialist countries and to justify such a war in the eyes of the peoples in capitalist countries.

Propaganda services of Western states have undertaken massive subversive campaigns against the peoples of many newly free states. Those progressive elements in the developing countries which advocate freedom and independence of peoples and equitable economic relations and oppose the aggressive policies of neocolonialists are targeted in particular.

US Policies in Action

The policies of the US imperialist circles with respect to other states and peoples are carried out from the position of domination and coercion. Hypocritically posing as champions of freedom and democracy, they never slacken their attempts to enforce its will outside the United States and suppress the people's struggle for national and social emancipation and progress.

The US Brookings Institution reported that between 1946 and 1975 the USA resorted to armed force 215 times in an attempt to modify the policies of governments and suppress revolutionary and national liberation movements. The army has been brought in whenever events took a turn that threatened the positions of American imperialism and wherever the peoples chose to pursue other than a capitalist path.

A few examples will suffice: 1) 1950-1953—armed intervention in Korea undertaken to rescue the South Korean puppet regime which found itself on the brink of collapse. US interference has been instrumental in maintaining the terrorist dictatorship which still exists. 2) 1962-1972—the bloody aggression against Vietnam and other states of Indochina. Americans themselves have called it a "dirty war". It was waged with extreme cruelty and involved the use of napalm, chemical weapons and other barbarous means of mass annihilation of the civilian population. But the Vietnamese people stood firm, defeated the invaders and foiled their attempt to crush the socialist country and suppress the national liberation movement. 3) Support of Israeli Zionism in its expansionist wars and terror against Arab peoples. The signing, under direct pressure from the USA, of the separate treaty between Egypt and Israel, which completely ignored the interests of the Palestinian people, has not led to the establishment of peace in the Middle East. Aided and abetted by the USA, Israeli troops have invaded the Lebanon killing both Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, demolishing their villages and destroying cities. 4) The plot against the lawful democratic government in Chile, the assassination of President Allende, support of Pinochet's military junta, which has engineered a fascist coup and established a bloody dictatorship in the country. 5) Direct parti-

cipation in suppressing the liberation movement in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and El Salvador. 6) Occupation of defenseless Grenada and the overthrow of its lawful government. 7) The undeclared war against Nicaragua. 8) Assistance extended to counterrevolutionary bands in Afghanistan fighting against the democratic elements that have assumed power in the country. 9) Armed actions against Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Libya and other newly free states.

It does not look as if the USA intends to let other peoples decide their own future. To extend its opportunities to execute its will and punitive function, the country has set up a so-called Rapid Deployment Force designed to suppress revolutionary and national liberation movements. The force consists of mobile units whose strength has already exceeded 300,000 men.

The policy of aggression, diktat and military adventurism, the unprecedented arms race imposed by this major imperialist power, the United States, show how accurate Lenin was when he said that one of the features of imperialism was the mounting of reactionary and militarist tendencies in all spheres, that it engendered wars and that military adventurism and aggressive wars were its constant companions.

Preparedness to Defend Peace and Rebuff Aggression

The Soviet Peace Policy

Throughout the history of the USSR, the Soviet Government and the Communist Party have steadily pursued a peaceful foreign policy. This is not a sign of the Soviet Union's weakness or a desire to pay homage to the political situation. Peaceful policy stems from the very essence of the socialist system and the Communist ideology. Soviet society has no classes or social groups whose interests would be promoted by war. Free from exploitation and oppression, the Soviet people seek a lasting peace and an international situation conducive to the building of a new life through peaceful labor.

Peace is the decisive condition for progress in any field of human activity. Mankind now faces tasks of great magnitu-

de: it has become vitally important to radically renovate people's life, attain social progress and deal with a large number of global problems. Today peace and progress are inseparably linked. Moreover, peaceful coexistence in nuclear age has become a condition of mankind's survival. This is one of the fundamental ideas presented by the new CPSU Program approved by the 27th Party Congress. It states, in part: "The CPSU will continue to do everything it can to secure peaceful conditions for the constructive work of the Soviet people, to improve international relations, and to stop the arms race that has engulfed the world, in order to avert the danger of nuclear war, which looms over all peoples." Having substantiated its view that another world war can be averted and defined realistic ways of attaining universal security and disarmament, the CPSU has again shown its dedication to a peaceful foreign policy founded on the desire to expand and deepen cooperation with the socialist states, promote equal and friendly relations with the newly free states, and maintain peaceful coexistence and businesslike and mutually beneficial cooperation with the capitalist countries.

Throughout its history, the Soviet Union has continuously sought to preserve peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems. In the postwar years it has concentrated its efforts on removing the threat of a nuclear war which threatens mankind.

Back in 1945, immediately after the emergence of atomic weapons, the Soviet Union stepped forward with a proposal to ban and eliminate this most powerful and dangerous means of mass destruction. The USA, which, being at the time the only nuclear power, was hoping that these weapons would allow for the unimpeded implementation of its aggressive policies, turned down the Soviet proposal point-blank.

After developing its own atomic arms, the Soviet Government again declared that the USSR continued to advocate its complete ban. In 1955 the Soviet Union advanced a comprehensive program of conventional arms reduction and a ban on nuclear arms. However, the Western powers again prevented these measures from being carried out.

Despite the obstructionist stand of the imperialist states, the Soviet Union has refused to slacken its efforts to ensure

peace and security of the peoples. In 1959 it submitted to the United Nations a program of general and complete disarmament. Its implementation would have disbanded all armed forces and eliminated all types of weapons, including nuclear. Countries would have retained limited police (militia) contingents for maintaining peace and order. The Soviet proposal was met with the broad support of peace advocates throughout the world. However, the United States and its allies did their best to prevent such a treaty from being signed.

All in all, the Soviet Union has advanced over 70 constructive proposals designed to ban nuclear weapons, limit strategic arms, halt the arms race and reduce armed forces numerically. Their realisation could have improved the international climate, supplemented political detente with military detente, promoted peace and confidence among nations, and removed the threat of war from the life of mankind.

Supported by the socialist community, the Soviet Union has recently advanced a number of new major initiatives aimed at reducing armaments, restricting the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and subsequently completely prohibiting their production and use, up to their complete removal.

In 1982 the USSR assumed a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. A similar commitment has been made by the People's Republic of China. The Western nuclear powers, however, have so far refused to take such a step.

The Soviet Union has suggested that all nuclear powers, starting with the USSR and the USA, freeze their nuclear arsenals and without delay proceed to their reduction and total elimination. The first step might be a fifty percent reduction of Soviet and US nuclear weapons capable of reaching each other's territory.

In addition to its proposals to radically reduce nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery the Soviet Union has urged that steps be taken to guard against the militarization of outer space. In 1983 the USSR proposed a treaty on the prohibition of use of force in outer space and from outer space against the earth. Simultaneously, the Soviet Government unilaterally undertook not to be the first to deploy anti-satellite means for as long as the other

states, including the USA, would refrain from deploying such means in outer space. In November 1985, at the Geneva summit the USSR suggested that the first step should be a ban on strike space weapons. The deployment of strike weapons in outer space may reduce the present strategic balance to a state of strategic chaos and raise the arms race to a qualitatively new level, which could have disastrous consequences.

Convincing proof of the determination of the CPSU and the Soviet Government to consolidate peace and security was revealed in the program proposed by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev in his statement made on January 15, 1986 to eliminate weapons of mass destruction by the year 2000, thus averting the threat of mankind's self-annihilation and attaining security for the present and future generations. As was stated at the 27th Party Congress: "Fulfilment of this program, which is epoch-making in its scope and significance, would open for humanity a fundamentally new period of development, the possibility of concentrating on constructive work alone." The Soviet Union's stance at the Reykjavik Summit (October 1986), which paved the way towards termination of the arms race and towards nuclear disarmament, was a concrete expression of the new approach to burning problems of today.

In 1987 the Soviet Union came out with new major peace initiatives aimed at reducing and completely eliminating nuclear missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. In late 1987, these efforts culminated in an important triumph for the policy of common sense. On December 8, the Soviet-American Treaty on the elimination of medium and shorter range missiles (the INF Treaty) was signed in Washington. The two major military and political powers undertook to destroy part of their nuclear arsenal. This represents the first step towards nuclear disarmament.

In its peace effort the Soviet Union is closely assisted by the other socialist countries. The Warsaw Treaty member states and the other countries of the socialist community vigorously support the Soviet Union's work to stop the arms race, prevent a nuclear war and effect complete disarmament. They advocate constructive steps aimed at consolidation of European security, complete removal of nuclear

arms from the continent and peaceful settlement of international issues.

However, the Soviet peaceful foreign policy and the country's readiness to engage in a dialogue and constructive settlement of international issues through negotiations does not mean that it is prepared to sacrifice the interests of the Soviet people or overlook the aggressive actions of imperialist states.

The Soviet Union does not infringe upon the security of any country in any region of the world, nor does it seek confrontation with any state or nation, it desires only to live in peace with all countries. But the USSR expects similar treatment from other states. It will never tolerate encroachments upon its sovereignty, freedom and independence, or the security of its allies and friends.

Soviet military might, used by Western propaganda as a bogey to frighten the ignorant public with the myth of the "Soviet military threat", will never be used except to defend the country and its socialist system against aggressive forces.

The Soviet Union proceeds from the viewpoint that its relations with the major capitalist countries, above all the USA, should be based on the principle of equal security. It has never put in a bid for military superiority over the USA, and opposed the escalation of the arms race.

Military Parity: a Guarantee of Peace and Security

It has taken decades for a rough military equilibrium in Europe and the world as a whole to be evolved and established. This parity now exists both between the USSR and the USA, and the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO. Attainment of military-strategic parity has been a historic accomplishment of socialism. It has consolidated the positions of the USSR, the socialist countries and all progressive forces and shattered the hopes of the aggressive imperialist circles for a victory in a world nuclear war. The maintenance of this parity is a reliable guarantee of peace and international security.

Military parity has been achieved as a result of the steps taken by the USSR in response to the arms race, which the United States launched immediately after the Second World War.

Of major importance for the strengthening of the Soviet Union's defense potential and attainment of parity was the work involved in developing nuclear-missile weapons and the profound restructuring of the USSR Armed Forces this has entailed. This task was quickly accomplished.

The world became aware of the creation of deadly nuclear weapons in August 1945. The USA not only produced the first atomic bomb but used it when it was absolutely unnecessary to do so. We have already stated that the Soviet proposal to prohibit the use of nuclear energy for military purposes was rejected by the USA. In the face of this new danger, the Soviet Union was forced to take retaliatory action. By the early 1950s, the USSR had its own atomic weapons, the USA's atomic monopoly no longer existed.

The strategic arms race was also launched by the USA. By the mid-1950s it had built the first strategic bomber and continued their production at a growing pace. The Soviet Union acquired this type of bomber in the late 1950s.

Together with strategic bombers, the USA was building nuclear-powered missile submarines. At the time when the Soviet Union commissioned the first atomic ice-breaker, thus inaugurating the peaceful use of nuclear energy in ship-building, the USA was building 41 nuclear-powered fleet ballistic missile submarines (SSBN). The USSR was obliged to follow suit.

The situation more or less repeated itself about fifteen years later when the United States developed multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles and equipped ballistic missiles with them.

In the 1980s the USA began the deployment of Pershing-2 medium-range ballistic missiles and long-range cruise missiles in Western Europe intended to deal the first strike at the USSR. In agreement with the other Warsaw Treaty members, the Soviet Union was forced to deploy additional weapons in order to counterbalance the growing nuclear potential of the USA and NATO. It was also forced to take necessary measures in respect of US territory to the same extent to which American weapons pose a threat to Soviet territory.

In an effort to justify their aggressive preparations, including Star Wars plans, representatives of the Reagan administration have stated that the USSR has a considerable

advantage over the United States in strategic arms. But this is simply not true. Back in the late 1970s, when the USSR and the USA signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-2), both sides admitted that a rough strategic arms parity existed between them. American experts, observers and official bodies have confirmed this more than once. The February 1984 JCS report to Congress referred to the current period as the "period of rough nuclear parity between the United States and the Soviet Union".

Allegations about the US "lag" in this field are used by the militarist circles to extract more money for military purposes. Their concern is not to restore the supposed disbalance but to change the alignment of forces in their favor. In the heat of an argument Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger once admitted: "The United States would spend as much as it needed to increase its power and gain an advantage over the USSR."

To tip the existing balance, the USA has launched a program for the militarization of space, the so-called Strategic Defense Initiative. The same end is served by the re-equipment of the armed forces with new strategic nuclear weapons.

However, plans for attaining military superiority over the USSR will never succeed. The Soviet Union has repeatedly declared that it will not allow military-strategic parity to be upset. The USSR is strong enough to respond to any measures taken by the imperialist aggressive forces. But the Soviet Union certainly does not want the level of military parity to rise; on the contrary, it has suggested that a joint effort be made to reduce it. This would be a realistic way to attain stable security and a subsequent disarmament.

*Strengthening of the Soviet Defense Potential:
a Measure Dictated by Time*

It has been largely through the efforts of the Soviet Union and other socialist states, which have pursued the peaceful foreign policy developed by Lenin and at the same time worked to build up their defenses, that the Soviet people and the majority of the world's population have been able to live in peace for over forty years. The combined defense potential of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, backed by the might of their armies, serves as

a major factor for preventing reactionary imperialist circles from unleashing another world war.

Realizing that imperialist policies are growing increasingly aggressive, the CPSU and the Soviet Government are working hard to strengthen the country's defense capacity and raise the efficiency and combat readiness of its Armed Forces.

The party Program states that "The CPSU will make every effort to ensure that the Soviet Armed Forces remain at a level that rules out strategic superiority of the forces of imperialism, that the Soviet state's defence capacity continues to be improved in every way and that military co-operation between the armies of the fraternal socialist countries is strengthened."

A vital condition for the country's strong defense potential has been its economic, scientific and technological progress, which entails the unswerving implementation of economic development plans. Rapid growth and better quality production in industry and agriculture, the smooth and efficient work of the transport and communication systems, the people's increased well-being, higher cultural and educational standards, and scientific and technological progress have placed the Soviet Union among the most advanced countries in the world.

The Soviet Union is strong enough to rebuff any aggressor. It has a mighty military, economic, moral, political, and scientific and technological potentials, powerful Armed Forces equipped with the latest weaponry and combat equipment, including nuclear weapons, reliable allies in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and the support and assistance of millions of peace fighters.

This, more than anything else, is what imposes certain restraints on the aggressors. Even the most rabid enemies of the Soviet Union are coming to realize that a nuclear strike would prompt retaliatory action that is sure to be devastating. The use of nuclear weapons would mean a universal catastrophe.

The military might of the Soviet Union does not threaten anyone. The USSR poses no danger to the security of any country in the West or in the East. But the Soviet state will never waive its security and the security of its allies.

While the threat of war persists, while social revenge remains pivotal to the strategy and militarist programs of the West, the Soviet Union, as its leaders have repeatedly asserted, will do everything that is necessary to maintain its defence capability, to keep up the vigilance and combat capacity of its Armed Forces at the appropriate level.

The Soviet country is at a crucial stage of its socio-economic development. Revolutionary reorganisation is under way in all fields of social life and activity. The personnel of the armed forces is actively participating in this process. Together with all Soviet people the Army and Navy are working hard to pursue the line of the 27th CPSU Congress. This line presupposes the unity of creative and defensive tasks, the will to peace and constant preparedness to defend socialist gains, concern for the strengthening of economic and defensive potential of the country.

ARMY OF THE STATE
OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE

*The Soviet System: a Source of the Armed Forces' Might * Indestructible Unity of the People and the Army * The Communist Party as an Organizer of the Armed Forces * Army Traditions Handed Down from Generation to Generation*

Sources of the Soviet Armed Forces' Military Might

Established to defend the October Revolution and the achievements of socialism, the Soviet Armed Forces have been fulfilling their lofty mission with honor, and reliably safeguarding the security of the Soviet state. As an army of the new, socialist type, they fully reflect the nature of the Soviet social and state system in all their aspects. This is an army of the Soviet people, free from exploitation and oppression, an army of the state which has built socialism, an army characterised by unity and friendship of the peoples of the USSR, a protector of the vital interests of the builders of a new society.

These characteristic qualities of the Soviet Armed Forces are at the same time the innermost sources of their high combat worthiness which rests on the stability of the Soviet political system, advanced Soviet economy, and the moral and political unity of the Soviet people rallied round the Communist Party. Loyalty to their socialist country and the cause of the Communist Party, Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism have always been the main factors ensuring that the people who serve as their country's defenders are dedicated and selfless when performing their duty.

The Soviet State and Social System

Born out of the October Revolution, the Soviet state first emerged as a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This was the power of the working class, which was closely allied with the toiling peasantry. Its historical objectives were to abolish capitalism, exploitation and all forms of social and national oppression and to build a socialist society.

Proletarian dictatorship accomplished these tasks. Revolutionary transformations in the country eradicated the exploiter classes. The last of these, the kulaks, wealthy peasants using hired labor, ceased to exist in the early 1930s, as a result of the transition to the collective farm system in agriculture which replaced individual small holdings. By the mid-1930s the Soviet Union had by and large completed the building of a socialist society, and in the late 1950s, the 21st CPSU Congress (1959), which summed up the work done in the country over the entire period that had elapsed since the October Revolution, concluded that socialism in the USSR had scored a complete and final victory.

That period witnessed profound social, economic and political changes. Within a historically brief period, the country had moved from centuries of backwardness to the height of social progress and attained outstanding successes in all spheres of the life of society. At present, the Soviet Union, which accounts for one-sixteenth of the world's population, produces one-fifth of its industrial output. For years, the Soviet Union has been first in the production of steel, coal, oil, iron ore, cement, locomotives, tractors, mineral fertilizers, rye, cotton and milk. Scientific and technological advances have made it possible to build anew or advance such modern industries as nuclear engineering, production of space and laser equipment and synthetic materials, and the electronic industry.

Considerable changes have taken place in the political life of the country and the life of society. The working class has grown numerically to reach two thirds of the gainfully employed population (one-third in the prewar years). It has matured politically and ideologically and attained higher educational, cultural and professional standards. Changes of comparable magnitude have occurred in agriculture. Labor

on collective and state farms is becoming increasingly more industrial, with the principal jobs performed by modern equipment and machinery. The number of machine operators, agronomists, animal specialists and other trained personnel has increased. The intelligentsia is increasing in number and is making a greater contribution to social production. A quarter of the total country's workforce is engaged in mental work. Physical and intellectual labor is becoming increasingly interconnected in the work of workers and farmers. This is paving the way for overcoming gradually the substantial distinctions between town and countryside and between classes making up the society.

The Party consistently pursues the Leninist nationalities policy. Friendly relations among the peoples living in the Soviet Union are growing stronger and closer. All republics have built advanced economies, and their national cultures are flourishing. Dozens of nationalities which before the October Revolution did not even have a written language now boast universities, scientists, writers and national theaters.

The Soviet people feel the care taken by the Party and the state to enhance their welfare in their daily life. The real incomes of all sections of the country's population grow from year to year, as well as the people's living and cultural standards.

The considerable headway made by the Soviet economy, the drawing together of all classes and social strata making up the society, and all nations and nationalities and their brotherly collaboration have given rise to a new historical community of people, the Soviet people. A great deal has changed in the political system of Soviet society. The country in which state power belonged to the working class has grown into a political organization of all working people, the state of the whole people.

The state of the whole people reflects genuine democracy and government by the people, and ensures direct and active participation of all working people in the life of the state and the management of its affairs. Approximately 2.5 million workers, peasants and intellectuals participate in the work of Soviets of People's Deputies, which form the political basis of the USSR. Tens of millions of people take part in the work of commissions set up within the framework of the Soviets. Among the 1,500 deputies to the hig-

hest body of Soviet state authority, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, are 527 workers and 247 peasants, who make up the absolute majority in the Soviet parliament.

Prospects for the new stage in the development of the Soviet Union have been outlined in the Program of the Communist Party, specifically, in its new edition approved by the 27th CPSU Congress in March 1986. It defines the principal trends in the development of the country and in international affairs, takes into account the experience accumulated by the Communist Party in the quarter century since the adoption of the Program's previous edition by the 22nd CPSU Congress (1961) and defines the ways for Soviet society's further development. The present edition of the Program is a program of a planned and comprehensive improvement of socialism and the further advance of Soviet society towards communism on the basis of the country's accelerated social and economic development. It is a program of work for peace and social progress.

The Indestructible Unity of the People and the Army

As the new society and socialist democracy and statehood advanced, the Armed Forces of the USSR also outgrew their role as a body of the dictatorship of the proletariat and turned into a body of the state of the whole people. After socialism was built in the Soviet Union, the Armed Forces completely lost their function as a suppressor of the overthrown exploiter classes and are now spearheaded exclusively against foreign enemies.

The most characteristic feature of the Soviet Armed Forces, their unity with the people, has now become ever more evident. This unity is based on the common goals and interests, ideals and aspirations of the entire people and its army. The Soviet people have a feeling of affinity with their army, assist it in every way, and do everything necessary to allow it to continue to be a powerful and reliable defender of the country.

The considerable economic and scientific and technological potential built up by the Soviet Union makes it possible to competently tackle the major and complex tasks involved in the country's defenses and to maintain the combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces at the high level re-

quired to rebuff any aggressor. Acceleration of scientific and technological progress and the strengthening of the country's economic potential which the Party and the people have designated as their principal objective, will make it possible to further improve the material base of state defense, maintain the military-strategic parity established between the USSR and the USA, and to maintain the constant combat readiness of the Army and Navy.

The development and consolidation of the Armed Forces is promoted by the profound social changes that are under way in Soviet society. Close and willing collaboration among the working class, peasants and intellectuals, and their increasing class and social homogeneity provide a sound foundation for keeping up the morale of the troops, a high level of their political awareness. All servicemen, whether private or marshal, come from the friendly classes and social groups constituting Soviet society.

Like all the Soviet people, servicemen have changed, maturing morally and spiritually, raising their educational standard and growing more socially active. They have developed a scientifically based materialist outlook, have a clear understanding of the policy pursued by the Party and the state and perform their duty consciously and responsibly.

One sign that army personnel is growing politically and ideologically more mature is the increasing number of Communists and Komsomol members in the Army and Navy. Before the Great Patriotic War, they accounted for 76 percent of all servicemen while the present figure is 85 percent. Soviet servicemen treat each other as reliable comrades-in-arms who pool their efforts to fulfil their sacred duty: safeguard the security of their socialist Motherland. This attitude serves to consolidate army ranks and enhance the men's ideological dedication, encourages more active participation in political and combat activities and helps in the successful military service and training.

Another factor which has a positive effect on the development of the Armed Forces is the numerical growth of the working class and the intelligentsia, industrialization and mechanization of farm labor, and the gradual elimination of distinctions between the cultural level of town and country. Most young men joining the army have, as a rule, good general educational background and a high standard of tech-

nical training. Practically all draftees have secondary or incomplete secondary, and quite a few, a higher education. Many young men, who were previously employed at factories or on farms, have skills useful for military service.

The social composition of the officer corps reveals that the Soviet Armed Forces are a body of men produced by the state of the whole people. Over half of all Soviet officers have a working class background, about 20 percent are children of farmers, and approximately 30 percent come from the intelligentsia. In the Soviet Union, nationality and social status do not matter when a person applies for officer school. What is necessary is personal ability, a sense of vocation and readiness to do one's best to justify the people's confidence. Soviet commanding officers, no matter how high their rank is, have come from the working people.

Take, for example, Marshal Georgi Zhukov, a celebrated military leader of the Great Patriotic War. Zhukov was born into a poor peasant family in the village of Strelkovka (Kaluga Region). He suffered all the hardships of a working man in prerevolutionary Russia. From the age of seven he worked in the fields, and at the age of twelve was taken on as an apprentice by a furrier. Later he was drafted into the czarist army and fought in the First World War. Then came the Revolution. In 1918 Zhukov joined the newly formed Red Army as a volunteer and fought to defend the Soviet government. In 1919 he joined the Bolshevik Party. He climbed all the steps of the military ladder, commanding first a unit, a regiment, a division, a corps and an army. His military talent was most clearly revealed during the Great Patriotic War, when he had a number of fronts under his command at the most vital directions, was a member of the GHQ Supreme Command and Deputy Supreme Commander. After the war, he held a number of top positions in the army including that of the USSR Minister of Defense.

Marshal Kirill Meretskov, another outstanding Soviet military leader, wrote of his own life:

"Could I, son of a poor peasant from the village of Nazaryevo (Ryazan Gubernia, now Moscow Region), later a fitter in Moscow and Sudogda, ever hope of becoming a general or a marshal? In czarist Russia I could only have worked for a master all my life. But everything changed abruptly.

The past was swept away never to return. I was twenty at that time...

"I am a professional soldier and have served in the Soviet Armed Forces for over 50 years, since 1917; that same year I was admitted to membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It would not be an exaggeration to say that I was among those millions of people for whom life began anew in the unforgettable year of 1917."¹

Kirill Meretskoy fought bravely in the Civil War against the White Guards, and served as a volunteer in the revolutionary war in Spain. Prior to the Second World War, he commanded a military district, was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for his contribution in the Finnish war (1939-1940), and, having acquitted himself with honor in the war against fascism as commander of various Fronts, was made Marshal of the Soviet Union.

The officer corps in the Soviet Armed Forces is at present formed by men who grew up after the October Revolution, and many—after the Great Patriotic War. They are the grandchildren of those veterans who fought for their country, children of those who helped rebuild the economy in the postwar five-year periods. They have been brought up by the Party as loyal citizens and continue to follow the traditions laid down by the heroes of the October Revolution, the Civil and the Great Patriotic wars.

Soviet servicemen enjoy in full the rights of all the citizens of the USSR, including the right to elect or be elected to bodies of state authority. Together with their fellow-countrymen, they take an active part in the country's political life, in the life of society and in managing state affairs. Over 17,000 servicemen are deputies of Soviets or members of district, town, regional or central Party bodies.

The nature of the Soviet Armed Forces as an organization representing the entire population of the country is reflected in the Law on Universal Military Service adopted by the USSR Supreme Soviet in 1967. The law states that military service in the ranks of the Armed Forces is the honorable duty of Soviet citizens. All male citizens of the USSR are liable for active military service in the ranks of the Soviet

¹ K. A. Meretskoy, *Serving the People*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, pp. 5-6.

Armed Forces, irrespective of origin, social and property status, race or nationality, education, language, attitude to religion, type and nature of occupation, and domicile.

Males who have turned 18 by the day of enlistment may be called up for active military service. Privates and sergeants of the Soviet Army, coastal troops and naval aviation, border and interior troops serve two years with the exception of men with a higher education, who serve 18 months; sailors and NCOs on battleships and in the coastal troops of naval combat support units and coast guard serve three years, with sailors and NCOs with a higher education serving two years.

Women between the age of 19 and 40 having medical or other special training may during peacetime be registered for military service, called up for training or enlisted for military service as volunteers, and, in wartime, called up for auxiliary or special service.

Prior to their enlistment, men of draft age or younger are put through primary military training without taking time off from work or studies. At schools, military training classes, and specially appointed training centers set up at factories and on collective farms the young men study Lenin's works on military matters, the basic demands that will be made of them as future servicemen by the Party and the Constitution of the USSR on the defense of the socialist country and the Military Oath and military manuals. They are acquainted with the basics of combat actions of army units, taught to handle firearms and other armaments and military materiel.

A great deal of work is done by the Voluntary Society for Assisting Army, Air Force and Navy (DOSAAF) to prepare young people for military service. This is a mass organization whose purpose is to promote the country's defense. Its training centers and clubs help young men and women acquire skills they will need when in military service. One of three draftees has a military skill acquired at the DOSAAF. Among them are drivers, mechanics, electricians and parachute jumpers. The Society also concerns itself with the young people's physical training.

A contribution to primary military training is made by vocational schools, which admit boys and girls of senior school ages to be trained as skilled workers for the indus-

ries. Here, boys also have a chance to master some of the skills required in the army.

The close unity between the army and the people is reflected in the varied contacts between factories and farms, on the one hand, and army units, on the other. Reciprocal visits, concerts, talks about tasks accomplished and those yet to be tackled, joint parties—these are frequent occurrences.

The patronage of the Lenin Komsomol of the Air Force, Navy and border troops has become a long-standing tradition. It recommends its best members for military schools and for service in units and warships. There is an extensive network of well attended Komsomol and Young Pioneer clubs, detachments and groups of young friends of the Army and the Navy. There, the children receive an idea of what military service is, take part in military-patriotic "war games" and take hiking tours around sites of former fighting. Thousands of schools and Young Pioneer detachments conduct searches for graves of unknown soldiers who died defending their country. All schools have museums or rooms of military glory set up by the children with the assistance of teachers. Komsomol members and Young Pioneers put together collections of books, records and slides to be sent to remote garrisons.

Another group of people patronizing the Army and the Navy are workers in the field of culture. Scientists, writers and journalists, actors and musicians frequently give free talks and concerts to servicemen and lend a hand in organizing amateur art, song and dance groups, choirs and theatricals. Carrying on the war tradition, these people make their way to distant regions and frontier posts where young Soviet men are doing military service.

In turn, apart from performing their duty as the country's defenders, Soviet servicemen are also involved in its political and economic life. Army units take part in harvesting, construction works and, whenever need be, help at times of natural disasters. Servicemen displayed their dedication and even courage during the building of the Baikal-Amur Railway—they built the eastern section of the railway stretching from the shores of the great Siberian Lena River to the country's eastern outskirts, over 3,000 km in all, ahead of schedule.

The Soviet Armed Forces are not only a safeguard of the country's security but an important school of life for young people. The army continues what was begun at school and the young man's first place of work, helping him to mature and develop politically, ideologically, morally and physically. And the most important goal of military service is to mould a well trained and politically conscious mature defender of his Motherland.

After completing their military service, the young men return to their studies or jobs. The skills and experience gained in the army enable many to progress in their field of endeavor, be it work at factories or on farms, studies or scientific research. Wherever they work, the men promote civic activism, discipline and smooth organization.

A Multinational Army

Unity and friendly relations among the peoples of the USSR are valuable achievements of socialism and of the Party's Leninist nationalities policy. These relations are based on mutual confidence, close cooperation and the common goals and vital interests of the nations and nationalities living in the country. All the peoples of the USSR have a single advanced economy which is geared to meet both the general interests of the state as a whole and the needs of each individual republic to an equal degree. There is also a single political organization of society, which secures to all nations and nationalities equal rights and duties, a single world outlook based on the Marxist-Leninist teaching, which rallies all nations and nationalities around the Communist Party and the Soviet Government.

The friendly relations now uniting the peoples of the Soviet Union have evolved and strengthened during the joint struggle against invaders and in the selfless work to build a socialist society. Like a mirror, the multinational Soviet Army reflects this unity and friendship, which serve as a source of its might and combat capacity.

All peoples of the USSR consider it their duty as patriots and internationalists to build up the country's defense capability and the might of the Soviet Armed Forces. Party bodies, Soviets of People's Deputies and public organizations in all Union republics do a great deal to prepare the young people for military service, provide better conditions

and facilities for the troops' combat training and daily life, and conduct a military-patriotic educational campaign among the population. They assist commanding officers and army political bodies in solving political, organizational and economic questions and take army units under their patronage.

Commanding officers, political workers and Party organizations in the Army and Navy, in their turn, take care to educate servicemen in the spirit of internationalism. At political education classes and in other forms of mass political work Soviet servicemen of all nationalities study the Party's Leninist nationalities policy, the processes involved in the further drawing of nations closer together and the development and consolidation of friendship among the peoples of the USSR. They learn about the achievements attained by the Union republics in the economic and cultural fields. Army units are visited by prominent Party and local government figures, foremost workers and farmers, writers and actors of different republics. Young soldiers listen with lively interest to their fellow-servicemen who have returned from a visit home, which may be anywhere in the country. International friendship is strengthened by the participation of servicemen in political and economic endeavors under way in a given republic—election campaigns, construction works and reconstruction of factories and housing after a natural disaster.

Military service in the USSR is geared to produce an atmosphere of unity and international fraternity of men. Soldiers of different nationalities are encouraged to form friendships, render help to each other in combat training and political education. Officers and Party and Komsomol bodies are careful to take national particularities into account in their educational work among the men. Young soldiers and sailors who need to improve their knowledge of Russian, which has been chosen by the peoples of the Soviet Union as the language of international communication, are given all the assistance they need in this effort. Like the rest of the Soviet people, Soviet servicemen are conscious of being, above all, citizens of their country at large, members of one family, and they take pride in this fact. This to a large extent motivates their conscientious and responsible performance of duties and their determination to uphold

the dignity and honor of an armed defender of their socialist Motherland.

These are some of the characteristic features of the Armed Forces of the USSR as a military organization of a socialist state. As the proletarian state developed into a state of the whole people, a similar transformation occurred in the Armed Forces. The unity between the people and the army and the friendship among peoples and soldiers of different nationalities have grown stronger, the material, political and moral foundations of the Armed Forces' might have been consolidated.

However, the class essence of the army of the state of the whole people has remained. It safeguards the interests of the working classes of its country and the cause of socialism against external aggressive forces and the exploiter classes of imperialist states. It may be seen, therefore, that the might of the Soviet Army is geared to repel outside adversaries of the socialist country.

Party Guidance of the Armed Forces

History has shown that as Soviet society forges ahead and as the plans and achievements of the Soviet people gain in scope, the role of the Communist Party as a leading and organizing force tends to grow. This refers to all aspects in the life and work of Soviet society, including military matters and the organization of the country's defenses.

Being a matter of such importance and complexity, the military build-up must be based on a sound scientific foundation and requires a great deal of competent organizing. In defining the goals and objectives in the military field and the trends and character of the development of the Armed Forces it is impermissible to concentrate exclusively on some of its aspects, e.g., military-strategic or technical and economic. All factors, including economic, socio-political, moral, spiritual and military, must be fully taken into account. A great number of both internal and international developments and processes have to be carefully assessed.

Only the Party and its collective leading body, the Central Committee, is fully competent to give a sound estimate of the sum total of these factors. A creative and scientific

approach to the analysis of all developments and the concern shown for all aspects of the life of society allows the Party to successfully deal with matters of great scope and complexity.

All questions in the field of defense are solved under the guidance of the Party. It directs and coordinates the work of state bodies and institutions, public organizations and all working people aimed at ensuring the country's security.

Strict coordination of the activities of the Party, the state and the military apparatus, with the Party retaining its leading role, made it possible, at all stages of the Soviet Union's history, to direct political, economic and military efforts towards strengthening the country's security and to efficiently use material and human resources for its reliable defense and in the case of war to defeat the aggressor.

The Party's Military Policy

The Party's military policy, which represents an integral part of its overall political effort, reflects the essence and principal direction of Party work to organize the defense of the Soviet Union, ensure, in cooperation with the other socialist countries, the security of the socialist community, and also its ideas and principles with respect to the most urgent problems of building up, the training and use of the armed forces.

The Soviet military policy is based on Lenin's teaching on the defense of socialist Motherland and on the economic, political and social foundations of Soviet society. Its purpose is to create a favorable peaceful background for the Soviet people's constructive work, and to build up the country's capability to repulse any aggression.

Questions of ensuring the country's defense and the development and improvement of the Soviet Armed Forces, which are of vital importance for the future of the USSR, have always been of primary concern to the Party. These matters have been discussed at all Party congresses, many plenary meetings and sessions of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo, and have evoked special decisions of the Party Central Committee.

Party documents discuss major points concerning the purpose of the Soviet Armed Forces, their importance and responsibility in safeguarding peace and the security of the

peoples, the content and principal components of the Armed Forces' combat potential, the conditions and factors making it possible to ensure the country's defense capability and the combat readiness of the Army and the Navy.

The Party is responsible for providing economic, political and moral conditions for maintaining the country's defense capacity, the development and consolidation of the Armed Forces and the training and education of servicemen. In this, it successfully combines the advantages of the socialist system with scientific and technological achievements, placing them at the service of the development and strengthening of the Army and Navy.

In devising its military policy the CPSU takes full account of the international situation, the alignment of class forces and the nature of prevalent contradictions in the world today. Its work in the field of defense is closely coordinated with the policies of the fraternal parties of the other socialist countries. Their joint effort is aimed at strengthening the unity and combat comradeship of the friendly peoples and armies and at organizing the collective defense of socialism.

In peacetime, the Party's principal concern is to hold back the aggressive forces of imperialism and impede their militarist ambitions. One of the ways to achieve this is to strengthen the Armed Forces of the USSR. In wartime, the policy pursued by the Party ensures that the entire potential of the army and the nation is mobilized to crush the aggressor.

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against Nazi invaders provided convincing proof of the soundness of Party policy and its role as an organizer. The Party succeeded in making the best possible use of the advantages of the socialist system, mobilize the all country's efforts and resources and raise the entire population to the struggle against the aggressor. Despite the original three-fold advantage the Nazis had in industrial potential, during the war the Soviet Union produced twice as many armaments as Germany and of better quality. The organizational work of the Party in the war greatly contributed to the increase of war production, greater fighting efficiency of the Red Army, mass training of reserve personnel for the front, and the wide-scale partisan movement behind the enemy lines. All

these factors secured the Soviet Union victory over the aggressor.

In the postwar years the Party and the Soviet Government channelled their efforts into promoting peace among the peoples, checking the aggressive forces of imperialism and ensuring the security of the country. A sound, carefully developed military policy pursued by the Party has made it possible to successfully tackle many of the complex problems posed by the development of the Armed Forces and the build-up of the country's defense potential. Two vital goals achieved were destroying the US nuclear monopoly and attaining military-strategic parity between the USSR and the USA, the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO. The Party has shown good judgement when defining and implementing the most effective directions for the further development of the Soviet Armed Forces thus enabling them to meet the demands set by modern warfare and the domestic and international situation.

The Party directs the work of scientists, research and design organizations and defense factories encouraging them to concentrate on developing and producing up-to-date and most promising armaments which play a decisive role in enhancing the Armed Forces' combat readiness and will guarantee that the military-strategic parity between the USSR and the USA is maintained.

The Party Central Committee timely exposes the drawbacks and shortcomings in combat training and political education of the troops and takes necessary steps to set things right and to ensure a high standard of alertness and combat readiness of the army.

As a branch of the Party's overall policy, military policy is combined with a constructive domestic and peaceful foreign political course. Taking care to build up the country's defense potential to the extent to which it ensures that aggression is deterred, the Communist Party and the Soviet state are working to implement a comprehensive program of peaceful projects and to enhance the people's welfare. In 1987, Soviet expenditure on the Armed Forces amounted to just 4.6 percent of the USSR's budget. Moreover, the Soviet Union never slackens its effort to attain peace and security, halt the arms race and effect complete disarmament.

The Party's political leadership is executed through state,

economic and public organizations. The same is true of its military policy.

The Soviet state is in charge of the country's security and defense potential; it also provides the Armed Forces with everything they need. The highest body of state authority, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, deals with issues of war and peace, and the organization of the country's defense. It also passes the Law on Universal Military Service and other laws. In between Supreme Soviet sessions, its Presidium decides questions concerning the martial law, mobilization, and others.

General control over the Armed Forces and their development is executed by the Soviet Government—the USSR Council of Ministers—which takes the necessary steps to ensure state security. Direct control over the Soviet Army and Navy is in the hands of the USSR Defense Ministry.

To pool the efforts and coordinate the work of state bodies and public organizations, the entire national economy and the Armed Forces to build up the country's defense capability, the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium forms the USSR Defense Council.

The Party's military policy is clearly reflected in the military doctrine, military strategy and the military build-up.

The Soviet Military Doctrine

A military doctrine represents a state-accepted system of views concerning the essence, purpose and nature of a possible future war. It also includes the military preparations of the country and the Armed Forces and the ways and methods of waging war.

Soviet military doctrine is based on Marxist-Leninist teaching and stems from the nature of the USSR's socialist system, the vital interests of the Soviet people and the objective need to be prepared for the collective defense of the countries of the socialist community.

Two mutually dependent aspects of a military doctrine are distinguished—political and military-technical. The leading role is played by the political aspect. It defines the political goals and the character of the war and their effect on the development of the Armed Forces and the country's war preparations; it also deals with the issues involved in strengthening military cooperation with the other frater-

nal parties and states to ensure socialism's collective defense. The military-technical aspect of the military doctrine reflects the views on the methods of waging military operations and the entire war, and deals with the questions of military build-up, technical equipment of the Armed Forces and maintaining their constant combat readiness.

The Soviet military doctrine and the doctrines of other socialist countries, members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, mirror the community of their vital interests and political goals; their main target is to prevent war, both nuclear and non-nuclear. Being strictly defensive, the military doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty member-states, proceeds from the need to maintain the military equilibrium at the lowest possible level and to cut down military expenditure to the level of sufficiency required by the interests of defence, and the fact that under the prevailing conditions, no controversial issue should be settled by military means.

The document on the military doctrine approved in May 1987 by the Berlin meeting of the Political Consultative Committee states: "The Warsaw Treaty members-states will never, under no circumstances, start military operations against any state or alliance of states whatsoever unless they themselves become the object of armed attack.

They will never be the first to use nuclear weapons.

They have no territorial claims towards any state either in Europe or outside Europe.

They do not regard any state or nation as their enemy; on the contrary, they are ready to build their relations with all countries of the world without exception on the basis of mutually taking into account the interests of security and peaceful coexistence."

Coming out in favour of disarmament, the Warsaw Treaty member-countries are forced to maintain their armed forces at the quantitative and qualitative level that would enable them to rebuff outside aggression against any of these states. The armed forces of the allied states are keeping up the standard of combat readiness sufficient to rise to any challenge, however unexpected. If an act of aggression is undertaken against them, they will deal the aggressor a crushing blow.

One of the key points of the military doctrines of the allied countries is the need to maintain military-strategic

parity between the USSR and the United States, the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO. This is seen as a decisive factor to deter imperialist aggression and an important guarantee of peace and international security.

An important place in the work of the Party to organize the country's defenses and build up the Armed Forces belongs to the development of military theory and the science of warfare. Lenin wrote that "a modern army cannot be built up without science".¹ Soviet military leaders and theorists consider Marxist-Leninist science and the Party's theoretical and practical work as points of departure for developing modern socialist military science and the art of war.

Party Bodies in the Army and Navy

The Party pays much attention to political work in the Armed Forces considering it to be of great importance for enhancing combat readiness and boosting the morale of the troops. "Where discipline is firmest," Lenin wrote, "where political work among the troops and the work of the commissars is conducted most thoroughly ... there we have no laxity in the army, there its organisation and morale are best, and there we have the most victories."²

Party-political work is organized and conducted by military councils and political bodies, commanding officers and political workers, and army Party and Komsomol organizations.

The Party Central Committee supervises Party-political work in the army through the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy which has the status of a CPSU Central Committee department and is the leading Party body in the Soviet Armed Forces.

In the system of Party guidance of the Armed Forces, a key role is performed by military councils formed of commanding officers in the armed services of the Armed Forces in the military districts, army groups, fleets and armies. These collective bodies settle the urgent questions of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Cossacks, March 1, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 395.

² V. I. Lenin, "All Out for the Fight Against Denikin!", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 448.

army and naval activities, control them and ensure their constant combat and mobilization readiness.

The armed services of the Armed Forces, military districts, fleets and army groups have political divisions subdivided into departments dealing with the definite aspects of political work: organizational, Party propaganda, etc. Armies, formations and separate units have political departments.

The political apparatus working in regiments and on warships consists of a deputy regimental (warship) commander in charge of political affairs, a propaganda worker, head of the cultural center, secretary of the Party committee or bureau, secretary of the Komsomol committee and deputy commanders of battalions, companies, batteries and other comparable units, in charge of political affairs. In larger units, on battleships, primary Party organizations and in smaller units—Party organizations or groups are set up.

The environment in which political bodies and Party organizations work in the Armed Forces differs vastly from that of civilian life. For this reason, the CPSU Central Committee issues Regulations on the Political Bodies in the Armed Forces and Instructions for Organizations of the CPSU in the Soviet Army and Navy. These complement Party Rules, which are guidelines for all its branches, including the military.

The Regulations on the Political Bodies state that these are leading Party bodies in the Armed Forces whose purpose is to build up fighting capacity of the Army and Navy and to ensure the daily and wholesome influence of the Party on the life and work of the Armed Forces. The Regulations define the concrete goals, forms and methods of work of political bodies aimed at promoting the servicemen's political and ideological education, uniting troops, strengthening discipline and organization and raising the troops' combat readiness.

Political bodies direct the work of political workers in units, Party and Komsomol organizations, army cultural and educational institutions and the military press, conduct ideological work among the personnel and organize socialist emulation between units to improve their performance. Their entire activity is designed to rally the troops around the CPSU, educate them in the spirit of Leninist ideas, and

encourage loyalty to their country and readiness to selflessly discharge their patriotic and internationalist duty.

Party organizations in the Army and Navy firmly and consistently follow the policy of the CPSU in the Armed Forces and do everything possible to raise their battle readiness. Communists are brought to the forefront in their military service, combat training and political education. These organizations work daily to enhance the servicemen's utmost vigilance, political awareness and discipline, teach them to strictly comply with army regulations and rules, enhance their performance when executing combat tasks, help them to master modern combat equipment and armaments and to fulfil their military duty faultlessly.

The Party Central Committee has always given careful consideration to directing the work of political bodies and Party organizations in the Armed Forces to the improvement of their political, ideological and organizational performance. In the postwar years the CPSU Central Committee has adopted a number of important decisions on improving Party-political work in the Army and Navy, expanding the rights and raising the role of military councils, enhancing the work of political bodies and Party organizations. Improvements were made in the structure of political bodies, and the office of deputy commander in charge of political affairs was introduced in companies and other equal units.

The basis for the organizational and political work of political bodies and Party organizations of the Armed Forces is provided for by the Program and Rules of the CPSU, decisions of Party congresses and CPSU Central Committee plenary meetings, and resolutions of the Party Central Committee. The new edition of the Party Program approved by the 27th CPSU Congress states that the Party considers it necessary in the future to increase its organizing and guiding influence on the Armed Forces' activities, strengthen the principle of one-man leadership, broaden the role and influence of the political bodies and Party organizations of the Army and Navy and make sure that the Armed Forces' vital links with the people become even stronger.

The Party regards the principle of one-man leadership in the Army and Navy as a major condition for high combat capacity and readiness of the Armed Forces. This is the

form of leadership which places the commander in complete control over his troops and makes him fully responsible for all aspects of their activities. Lenin considered this the most expedient form of leadership under which "strict unity of will" is ensured "by thousands subordinating their will to the will of one".¹ The commanding officer's work is directed and controlled by higher-ranking officers.

One-man leadership in the Soviet Armed Forces is constructed along Party lines. In his work the commander is supported by the Party organization and observes the Leninist norms of leadership: he must be constantly aware of the demands set by the Party, be businesslike, competent and a man of principle, and he must maintain close links with the mass of soldiers. He should be able to use constructive criticism and self-criticism to help remove shortcomings, to set high standards for his subordinates and, at the same time, show constant concern for them.

The fact that Soviet commanding officers (commanders of regiments, warships and other units) have been elected to over 80 percent of Party committees and bureaus in army and naval units indicates their adherence to Party principles, ideological maturity and prestige.

The Party and the Government never fail to show their appreciation of the work of military cadres. Everything is done to facilitate their service, studies and training.

Komsomol in the Army and Navy

Komsomol organizations in the Army and Navy are one of the most active sections of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol), which numbers over 42 million young men and women. Komsomol members in the army are reliable assistants of Communists in pursuing Party policy in the Armed Forces.

The work of army Komsomol bodies is directed by political bodies and Party organizations.

The Soviet Komsomol has an illustrious and heroic past. Its banner features six Orders it has been awarded for outstanding service to the country displayed in the revolution-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 269.

ary struggle, valor in the selfless defense of the socialist Motherland, and its tangible contribution to the building of socialism and education of the younger generation.

The first detachments of young revolutionaries took part in the 1917 October Revolution. Tens of thousands YCLers fought bravely in the ranks of the Red Army against foreign interventionists and the White Guards.

After the Civil War, the Party Central Committee decided to set up Komsomol organizations in Red Army units. They were to assist Communists in the education of young servicemen. At the same time, the Komsomol took the Red Navy and later the Air Force under its patronage. The Komsomol sent thousands of its best members to military schools and to the Air Force and Navy. In the years before the Second World War the Komsomol took active part in the setting up of *Osoaviakhim*, a mass voluntary society, helping its members to acquire technical skills required in the Army and Navy.

One of the most illustrious pages in the history of the Komsomol was its contribution to the struggle against fascism. In the war years, army and naval Komsomol organizations admitted about 5 million young soldiers. Approximately 1.8 million of Komsomol members joined the Communist Party. Following the Communists' example, Komsomol members fought heroically in the front ranks against Nazi invaders. For its heroic performance in the war, the Komsomol was given the country's highest award, the Order of Lenin.

In peacetime, the primary concern of the Komsomol in the Army and Navy is to promote political and combat activity of young servicemen, enlist their efforts towards mastering military skills, strengthening discipline and organization, and performing their duty in the best way possible. The Komsomol is an energetic assistant of the Party in its work to maintain the Soviet Armed Forces' utmost vigilance and constant combat readiness.

Komsomol members make an important contribution to ideological, educational and cultural work. This includes gatherings devoted to discussing a particular subject, disputes on issues of morality, politics or literature, discussions of films and TV programs.

Komsomol members are active participants in socialist

emulation between units for higher results in combat training and political education. They have initiated the campaign for raising the standards of skills of army and naval specialists and for introducing innovations and inventions. The most active core of Komsomol organizations assists commanding officers and political workers in conducting mass political work, equipping political information rooms, issuing wall newspapers, preparing radio programs, and spreading the useful experience gained by emulation front-rankers. Komsomol members are very active in amateur art activities and do a great deal of work, as patrons, in local schools, at factories and on farms.

During their leisure time servicemen enjoy participating in sports. Here, Komsomol members are also among the leaders. Sports competitions and physical fitness tests to win higher grades are a favorite pastime on weekends.

The Training of Military Cadres and Ensuring the Smooth Functioning of the Troops

The Communist Party shows concern for every aspect of the army's daily life. This includes not only the development, technical equipment and combat training of the troops, but also cultural enrichment of servicemen and providing adequate facilities allowing them to serve effectively and live in comfortable conditions.

One of the more important aspects of Party work is the training of army cadres: dedicated and competent commanding officers, political workers, engineers and technicians. The Party's work is based on Lenin's concept that military cadres are the decisive force in the development of the army and strengthening of the country's defense potential. The Party makes everything necessary so that military cadres expand constant knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory, have high professional and technical standards and meet the demands set by the modern art of war.

A great deal has been accomplished in recent years to improve the training of and strengthen the officer corps. A number of new military academies and schools have been opened, mostly those training engineers and technicians. Educational establishments training commanding officers have been stuffed with highly qualified lecturers. All of these train skilled specialists with a higher education.

Many secondary military-technical schools have been transformed into institutions of higher learning. The officers graduating from them receive an engineer's diploma. The training of military specialists is geared to produce skilled commanding officers in definite armed services of the Armed Forces and arms of the service.

Higher military-political schools have been set up to train highly qualified political work officers. Together with higher military-political education, graduates of these schools receive general military training which is geared to meet the requirements of the armed service in which they will serve. Anti-aircraft troops, the air force, nuclear-powered submarine fleet and other branches of the Armed Forces receive political instructors who also have a good technical background and are skilled in combat use of armaments and sophisticated equipment.

Officers who have graduated from higher military and military-political schools and distinguished themselves in the service may apply to military academies, as a rule those that correspond to their arms of the service. Academies train officers of the highest qualification, real experts in the art of war who have an extensive knowledge of the theory and all the skills necessary to control, train and educate the troops. Practical service further advances their theoretical and practical knowledge. Commanding officers, political workers and engineers and technicians regularly attend refresher courses at military educational establishments.

In 1972, the ranks of ensign and warrant officer were introduced in the Armed Forces of the USSR. This is a qualitatively new category of servicemen. In rank, duties and rights they stand close to junior officers and are their closest aids in the education and training of troops. Many have high technical skills and head sections and crews servicing modern armaments and materiel. Ensigns and warrant officers are recruited on a volunteer basis from among the servicemen under 35 years of age who have, as a rule, graduated from appropriate schools.

The most numerous section of army and navy commanders are sergeants and petty officers. This category of junior commanders is formed from among the best-trained soldiers and sailors who have passed a training course. Officers and political bodies are careful to supervise the edu-

cation and work of these men, to help them raise their military skills and develop a commander's qualities. As the immediate superiors of soldiers and sailors, sergeants and petty officers are necessarily engaged in daily educating and training their sections, crews or teams. This is where a soldier or a sailor gets most of his moral and professional training. Sergeants are training in special educational units in military districts and on fleets.

The Party and the government are concerned with ensuring the smooth arrival of supplies to the troops and making their daily life more comfortable. Military districts and fleets supply more comfortable housing for the officers' families, especially in remote garrisons, as well as new barracks for the troops, army cultural centers, officers' clubs and communal services centers. Old garrisons are being updated to meet changed architectural and living standards.

Steps are being taken to improve medical services and the supply of the troops with foodstuffs, clothes and items for personal use. Army outpatients' clinics, medical centers and hospitals are supplied with the latest instruments and equipment. The network of health-building and holiday homes is expanding. Many formations and units have their own subsidiary farms which add significantly to the establishing food rations supplying the officers and men with fresh meat, dairy products, fruits and vegetables. The target is for each unit to have such a farm. The quality and caloric value of men's rations has substantially improved in recent years.

Steps are taken to supply the troops with good quality, comfortable and attractive clothes. Now that the country is more wealthy, the clothing of all categories of servicemen has been improved. The quality of fabric used for uniforms has improved, and the soldiers' and officers' wardrobe has expanded. Officers, ensigns and extended-service men have full dress, everyday and field uniforms, and those doing regular service—full dress, everyday and field and working uniforms.

The outstanding victories scored by the Soviet Armed Forces, their past and the present reveal the decisive significance of Party guidance of the military build-up. This

competent leadership guarantees the high combat capacity and constant combat readiness of the Army and Navy to defend the achievements of socialism.

Soviet Army Traditions

The Soviet people have many glorious revolutionary, labor and combat traditions and the traditions of the Soviet Armed Forces are their part and parcel. Evolved in heroic battles fought for the country, the rigors of daily army life, in defending the Soviet Union and performing internationalist duties, army traditions are passed on from generation to generation; they are carried on and supplemented by young soldiers who continue the cause begun by their fathers and grandfathers.

The basic and most cherished traditions of Soviet servicemen are dedication to their socialist country, the Party and people, loyalty to the cause of socialism and communism, constant readiness to defend the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community. These are traditions of the greatest social value, and they best describe the moral make-up of the Soviet people and young men serving in the Army and Navy. They most strikingly convey the Soviet people's love for their country and their internationalism.

Other splendid army traditions of Soviet servicemen are loyalty to their Military Oath, their military duty, courage in combat, the will to improve their skills, comradely feelings towards their fellow-soldiers, respect for commanding officers and readiness to protect them in battle, loyalty to and genuine affection for their unit or warship, loyalty to the Unit Colors and selfless defense of it in combat.

Other army traditions have been evolved which stem from the performance of daily military service, combat training, the fulfilment of the military duty. Many have been given the status of not just moral but legal norms and have been recorded in the Soviet Military Oath and service regulations.

Loyalty to the Soviet Country

Patriotism, love for one's country, is one of the earliest sentiments evolved by the human race. Real patriots have al-

ways fought or worked for a better future for their country and people. Patriotic sentiments are most clearly expressed in the civil or liberation wars of nations against foreign invaders and colonialists, and in revolutionary struggle against oppressors.

In exploiter society, the feelings of the masses towards their country are incomplete and controversial. They cannot help but love their native region and country and are prepared to rise to its defense in time of trial. But neither can they help resenting the exploiter system, social injustice and oppression.

Patriotism regained its fullest and most profound meaning with the victory of the October Socialist Revolution and the emergence of the world's first socialist state. Since that time the people's love for their country, the place where they were born and where they live, has become fused with a sense of pride for their freedom and the Soviet state in which all power and all the good things of life belong to the people.

Soviet patriotism, love for and loyalty to their socialist country are striking qualities in the Soviet people's moral make-up, and the most glorious tradition of the Soviet army.

The prominent Soviet military leader Marshal Vasilcivsky wrote: "Even in his everyday life, a person never forgets that he has a Motherland whose interests are sacred for him. This sentiment becomes particularly poignant in the hour of trial. When a tangible threat is posed to the country's freedom and independence, each Soviet citizen displays genuine concern for its future. The feeling of patriotism becomes extremely acute and turns into that unquenchable flame which determines all his actions and practical steps. All other interests recede into the background."¹

The entire history of the Soviet Armed Forces is a testimonial of the Soviet servicemen's love for their socialist country and loyalty to the cause of the Communist Party. Soviet people believe that although life is the most precious thing a person has, his country is still more precious. If need be, he is ready to give his life for its honor and freedom, to allow it to become even stronger and flourish. And this is not mere talk. Fighting for their country, Soviet soldiers

¹ *Voenny Vestnik* (Army Herald), 1977, No. 5.

have proven that selflessness is indeed a norm, the highest law of Soviet ethics.

In the years of the Civil War, when the young Red Army fought to defend the socialist Motherland born out of the October Revolution against interventionists and the White Guards, their utter devotion to their country gave them the strength and firmness to hold out in the struggle against the enemy numerically superior and armed to the teeth.

Love for their country was what made millions of Soviet people fight to the bitter end in the years of the Great Patriotic War. Having lived in a truly free society, they were ready to suffer anything in order to crush the invaders and defend their country. The noble goals of the war bred courage and staunchness and gave rise to mass heroism. "For the Soviet Motherland!" were the words inscribed on the colors of regiments and divisions; this was the motto of the men going into attack, and it helped them to win.

Throughout its entire history, the Soviet Army has never acted as an aggressor, has not captured a single inch of another country's territory. It has only repulsed aggression, fought to liberate its country and rendered disinterested aid to peoples in their struggle for the liberation from fascism and for independence.

The younger generations of Soviet soldiers and sailors have proved as loyal to their country as their brave fathers and grandfathers. The achievements of the Soviet people in the building of a new life inspire them to proficient military service and feats of valor. With their country in their mind's eye, Soviet servicemen perform their arduous duties, guarding its airspace and taking part in difficult air, naval and land exercises.

Awareness of Internationalist Duty

Socialist internationalism is one of the fundamental principles in the development and activity of the Soviet Armed Forces. Performing their internationalist duty is one of the most valuable traditions that has evolved in the army. Multinational by composition and closely knit by the friendship of the Soviet nations and nationalities the Soviet Army is a liberation army by its nature and purpose. Lenin pointed out this feature more than once as a source of its strength and invincibility.

Addressing Soviet servicemen of different nationalities at a meeting of the Warsaw Revolutionary Regiment on August 2, 1918, Lenin spoke of the great honor to defend revolutionary ideas with arms in one's hands and to realize the international fraternity of the peoples in practice. "And, comrades," he said, "I am confident that if you muster all your military forces and set up a mighty international Red Army, and hurl these iron battalions against the exploiters and oppressors, against the reactionary thugs of the whole world, making your battle cry 'Victory or Death!'—no imperialist force will be able to hold us!"¹

Fighting against the foreign interventionists and the White Guards in the Civil War, the Red Army did more than defend the freedom and independence of its own country. Defending the world's first socialist state, the stronghold and hope of the peoples fighting for their emancipation, Red Army men performed their internationalist duty to the working class and the working people of all countries. The Soviet soldiers also demonstrated its loyalty to internationalist duty during the Great Patriotic War, in which they brought freedom and independence to many peoples of Europe and Asia.

Today these traditions are kept up and developed by the Soviet Armed Forces, which are performing with honor their patriotic and internationalist duty as defenders of peace and socialism.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Union helped set up troops of several countries which had been occupied by Nazi Germany. They grew and strengthened in fighting as units on Soviet Fronts, and later turned into the modern armies of socialist states. Fighting for a common cause promoted friendship and cooperation between Soviet soldiers and those of other people's armies. Now, they formed a defensive alliance, the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which ensures the collective defense of socialism. Soviet Army men consider it their internationalist duty to develop the traditions of military comradeship and friendship with their fellow-soldiers in the armies of the fraternal countries.

Strong friendships with the fraternal armies have been

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 39.

formed by Soviet servicemen doing their military service abroad in some of the Warsaw Treaty countries. In performing their duty, Soviet servicemen compare notes with their comrades-in-arms and maintain friendly relations with the populations of the socialist countries where they are stationed. There are many instances when Soviet servicemen have distinguished themselves while performing their internationalist duty.

Many people in the German Democratic Republic know the name of Alexander Ivanushkin, a Soviet Air Force officer. When his plane broke down, an occurrence when regulations prescribe that the pilot jettison from the aircraft, Major Ivanushkin refused to do so for he was flying over a town and the plane would have crashed into a residential suburb. The pilot did his best to steer his plane beyond the town limits, knowingly sacrificing his life to save hundreds of people. For his feat he was posthumously awarded the Order of the Patriotic War 1st Class.

Many similar feats have been performed more than once by Soviet young men serving in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Relations of friendship and cooperation keep strengthening and developing between the Soviet Army men and the peoples and the army men of revolutionary Afghanistan. At the request of the country's government, a limited contingent of Soviet troops has been stationed there. Their objective is to help the freedom-loving people of Afghanistan to defend the gains of the revolution against the intervention of henchmen of militarism.

Soviet servicemen have won the respect and fraternal affection of Afghan workers and peasants by their valor, keen awareness of their internationalist duty, faultless behavior and selflessness.

In performing their internationalist duty, Soviet troops have always displayed firmness of principles and admirable moral, political and professional qualities. Many have been decorated with state awards of the USSR for valor, courage and military skill.

Loyalty to the Military Oath

The Soviet Military Oath is of the same age as the Soviet Army itself. The tradition of taking the oath evolved along-

side the formation of the first socialist army in the fire of the Civil War. Coming out in defense of the revolution, soldiers of the first Red Army regiments felt a moral compulsion to give an oath of allegiance to their country. Different versions of the oath have been in use in units and on warships, but their purport was the same: the workers and peasants who had taken up arms pledged to their people and their government to courageously and selflessly fight for the Soviet power, be merciless towards interventionists and the White Guards, and spare no effort to save the gains of the revolution.

Raising the military oath to the status of a state document, on April 22, 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the highest legislative body of the Soviet Republic, approved one text of the oath and made it obligatory for the entire Red Army. The oath was called the Solemn Promise.

Lenin considered the Military Oath a document of great political and moral significance. On May 11, 1918, he was present at the swearing-in ceremony of soldiers and commanding officers of Moscow's Red Army regiments at Mikhelson's factory (which was later named after Lenin). According to participants in the ceremony, Lenin made a short speech on the vital difference between the old, czarist army, and the new, Workers' and Peasants' Army and the significance of the Red Army Oath, and then joined the ranks and began to recite the Oath, with the Red Army men repeating each word after him.

The text of the Solemn Promise was printed in the *Red Army Man's Book* which was read and approved by Lenin. Army units took the Oath before departing for the front or upon arriving there before going into combat.

Utter loyalty to the country and the Oath they had taken bred mass heroism in battle, and this has also become a tradition of Soviet troops.

Heroism comes naturally to people who are strong in spirit and motivated by lofty ideas. Firmness of principles and faith in the justice of the cause they champion help people to overcome fear and achieve victory.

Colonel-General Alexander Rodimtsev, who was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for valor displayed in the revolutionary Spanish war, and was awarded the title

of Hero of the Soviet Union for the second time for personal courage, bravery, and brilliant leadership of troops in the Great Patriotic War, had this to say:

"After the war I was asked more than once if I had ever seen people who had no sense of fear whatsoever. The answer is no. But I have seen thousands upon thousands of men who were guided entirely by their sense of duty in the dangerous, overwhelming situation of fighting. As a commander I consider that person courageous who can act coolly, sensibly and daringly in a most critical situation.

"I was lucky to cover nine thousand kilometers of war-time roads together with brave and staunch people. I saw mortally wounded men who, having regained consciousness, asked the last question in their lives: has their company been able to stand firm? I have held bullet-pierced Party and Komsomol membership cards of officers and men who had not retreated a step in their last battle. Courage, bravery is a natural part of the Soviet character which evolved under socialism. Heroism has become a deep, conscious norm of behavior."¹

Today, in time of peace, the loyalty of Soviet servicemen to their Military Oath means a conscientious attitude to one's combat training, a thorough study of modern armaments and equipment, conscious discipline, readiness for arduous duties and the feats of arms in order to perform one's patriotic and internationalist duty.

An example of such an attitude was given by officer I. Zhukov, a pilot. While flying a supersonic training aircraft, something went wrong with the steering wheel. In such cases landing is believed to be impossible, and the crew is ordered to leave the plane. But Communist Zhukov decided to do his best to land, not only to save the plane but also to discover what went wrong. A pilot with a great deal of flying experience and one of the first to begin flying this type of aircraft, Zhukov had to use all his skill, courage and endurance to land the practically uncontrollable machine.

The experience of Colonel Zhukov's army service includes a number of other instances when he demonstrated a great deal of courage. One could say that his entire military record was one long act of heroism, for which he has

¹ *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), February 26, 1975.

been awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, a rare instance in peacetime. His career provides a splendid example of loyalty to military duty for his younger colleagues.

Defense of the country demands of a serviceman readiness to display, at any moment, the highest moral and fighting qualities. It may even entail the sacrifice of one's life, as is stated in the Oath. This was the case with pilot G. Yeliseev, who, in defending the air frontier of his country in peacetime, had to sacrifice his own life by resorting to ram, this weapon of the brave. He was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Commanding officers and political workers work tirelessly to help their men evolve a responsible attitude to their duties and loyalty to the Military Oath. An important part of this work is the traditional ceremony of taking the Oath, a memorable occasion which is held in the presence of the Unit Colors. Each serviceman reads out the Oath and adds his signature to those of his fellow-soldiers. In the unit or on the warship, this is a red-letter day which is celebrated as a holiday. Representatives of Party, government and public organizations, war and labor veterans and servicemen's parents are frequently invited to witness the ceremony.

In the postwar years, a tradition has evolved to take the Oath at a memorable site. Young men serving in the Moscow garrison, for example, feel honored to take the Oath in Red Square, before Lenin's Mausoleum, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at the Kremlin Wall, or at Lenin Factory. In Leningrad, sailors take the Oath of allegiance to their country at the legendary cruiser *Aurora*, which took part in the October Revolution of 1917. In Hero Cities, the men take the Oath at places evoking the memory of heroes of the Great Patriotic War: in Kiev, at the impressive memorial on the bank of the Dnieper, in Volgograd—on Mamayev Hill, Black Sea Fleet sailors—on Mountain Sapun in Sevastopol, in Brest—at the Hero Fortress on the Bug...

Soviet servicemen speak the words of the Oath fully aware of the profound justice and lofty nature of the goals inherent in defending the dignity, freedom and independence of their socialist country and peace and the security of the peoples of the world.

Respect for Commanding Officers and Readiness to Defend Them in Combat

Soviet commanding officers have come from the common people and are ready to defend them in battle. They personify the deeply-rooted unity of the army and the people. The same kind of ties connect officers with their men. They have been born in the same country, belong to the same people and have the same interests and aspirations. As Lenin noted, it is this that makes the socialist army monolithic, strong and invincible.

Soviet commanding officers and political workers enjoy the well-earned respect of the people. Outstanding military leaders who have distinguished themselves in the Civil and the Great Patriotic War and a large number of courageous and competent commanders and commissars, political instructors and officers are among the country's best-known and respected individuals.

Afanassy Beloborodov, one of the military leaders of the Great Patriotic War and Hero of the Soviet Union who distinguished himself commanding the 78th Rifle Division of the 16th Army in the battle of Moscow, has this to say of the Commander of the 16th Army Konstantin Rokossovsky:

"I thought at that time that it was no accident that the name of Rokossovsky was always mentioned among the troops with pride and affection. He fused personal courage and the talent of a commanding officer with impeccable appearance, carriage, dignity and a perfect manner of communication with his subordinates.

"Once, also near Moscow, he arrived at the command post of our division, from where he intended to make his way to the forward lines. 'I'll take a liaison officer,' he said in a voice which tolerated no objections. Still, I found it necessary to remind him of the risk. 'Well, what about yourself?' he asked, using the familiar form of address. 'I bet you are often there.' Then he said that when one does not visit the trenches for a long time one begins to feel that something is slipping away from him; one begins to lose the feeling which must always connect the officer and the soldier...

"He mentioned this very often. Each time, reporting the

situation to him, I knew which questions I was going to be asked afterwards: Do the men receive hot meals regularly? Is there hot water in the trenches? When had the infantrymen last had a bath? He expected clear and accurate answers."¹

War veterans almost invariably recollect their superiors with affection. Themselves setting a personal example in courage, Soviet commanding officers demanded the same selflessness and dedication from their subordinates. But they also took good care of their men. Even in the harshest conditions of battle, commanding officers and political workers often did what seemed beyond the limits of human ability to provide their men with everything they needed. Their reward was their men's courage and initiative in combat, their readiness to obey an order cost what it may.

The warm feelings entertained by men towards their superiors are vividly reflected in the innumerable instances when soldiers selflessly protected their commanding officers in combat, sacrificing their own lives to save the officers from enemy bullets and shrapnel. This is one of the most valuable traditions of Soviet army brotherhood.

The relationships uniting the men and the traditions of Soviet army life are such that both officers and men are expected to take care of each other and protect each other whenever there is danger. A Soviet commander will unhesitatingly rush to the rescue of his man in a critical situation, showing no consideration for his own safety.

The Soviet press has printed a decree on the posthumous decoration of Major Yevgeni Grivansky with the Order of the Red Star "for courage and valor displayed when performing his military duty". During military exercises, the officer covered a grenade with his body a second before it exploded, thus saving the life of a soldier. A similar feat was performed by Lieutenant Alexander Kiselyov, deputy company commander in charge of political affairs. Saving a soldier as a grenade burst, he remained alive but lost both arms. Government bodies and his friends did everything necessary to find him a satisfying job and allow him to lead a normal life.

Comradeship-in-arms, that brotherhood which emerged

¹ *Krasnaya Zvezda*, March 26, 1981.

in the difficult times of defending one's country, is also evident during peacetime. Soviet servicemen consider it natural to help each other in studies and work, to share their fellow-soldiers' joys and sorrows.

The friendship and comradeship characteristic of the Soviet Army are formed on a sound and principled basis. Such undesirable occurrences as covering up for a wrong-doer, selfishness, improper relations among soldiers of different arms or with a different speciality are alien to Soviet servicemen. Commanding officers and political workers take pains to foster relations of close cooperation and interaction in the army. This is most clearly demonstrated at joint military exercises, maneuvers and in the men's daily life and activity.

Together with unselfish mutual aid, genuine comradeship implies open criticism of mistakes and unworthy behavior, and the wish to prevent a fellow-soldier from doing wrong. Care for the unity of the troops, strict discipline and a healthy moral climate are everybody's concern in the army, and are promoted by both officers and men.

Unit Colors—a Symbol of Military Honor and Glory

The Unit Colors is one of the most honored and revered symbols in the Soviet Armed Forces. It personifies the history and present of a regiment, warship, or division. The Statute on the Unit Colors reads: In the Armed Forces of the USSR, the Unit Colors is a symbol of military honor, glory and valor, it is a reminder to each serviceman of his sacred duty to loyally serve his Soviet Motherland, to defend it courageously and competently, to fight for each inch of the native land without sparing one's blood and life itself.

The Unit Colors has a long and glorious history. Centuries ago, it was a sign for the troops to rally round it. Old Slavs called it a *styag*, from the verb *styagivat*, gather together. In the 16th century, it was a combat symbol of *strelets* units. In the early 18th century, Czar Peter the First legalized the shape of the colors and introduced the ceremony of taking the Oath under it.

The czarist army was founded on coercion, rod discipline, merciless drilling, and the rightlessness of the lower ranks. But whenever the need arose to fight for their coun-

try, against foreign enemies, the Russian people were staunch and brave and showed high respect for their Unit Colors.

Having risen to the struggle for its emancipation, the working class chose the revolutionary Red Banner as its *styag* and symbol of unity. In 1871, it was hoisted on the harricades of the Paris Commune. It floated over the first proletarian demonstrations in Europe and Russia, and was featured in the First Russian Revolution of 1905. Red banners were in the hands of the standard bearers of Red Guard units in the days of the October Socialist Revolution.

The red color of the banner symbolizes the color of the flame, which has always been the symbol of fighting for the freedom and happiness of the peoples. It is also the color of blood shed by generations of revolutionaries.

Loyal to revolutionary traditions, the world's first socialist state chose the Red Banner as its State Flag. It also became the Colors of the world's first Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

Lenin placed great importance to educating Soviet servicemen on combat traditions and revolutionary symbols. He regarded the Red Banner as the personification of the officers' and men's loyalty to their military duty and the cause of defending the revolution.

Red banners were adopted by units and formations of the Red Army fighting against the foreign interventionists and the White Guards in the Civil War.

The Soviet Unit Colors is a rectangle of red cloth bearing the symbols of the Soviet state, a hammer and a sickle depicted in gold and a five-pointed red star edged in gold, the name of the unit and the motto, "For Our Soviet Motherland!" The guards Unit Colors also features an embroidered portrait of Lenin framed by the words of the motto.

Hundreds of army units and formations have been awarded with high military decorations and given honorary titles for their victories in battles for the country. Flagstuffs of many distinguished regiments and divisions have ribbons attached to them. For their outstanding performance in the Great Patriotic War, formations, units and warships have been decorated with 10,900 military Orders. Quite a few army and naval units and formations have won military awards in peacetime.

In the heat of fighting, it has become a tradition to pro-

tect the Unit Colors of the battlefield whatever the cost. This tradition has long been a norm and was entered into the Statute on the Unit Colors and Soviet army manuals, which state that the Unit Colors must never leave their units or the area of combat operations on the battlefield. The unit personnel must selflessly and courageously protect the Unit Colors in combat and prevent it from being captured by the enemy.

During the Soviet offensive at Stalingrad, Unit Colors were fixed on tops of hills and heights. Blazing like fire above the snow-covered plain, they boosted the fighting spirit of the troops, giving them fresh courage and determination to rout the enemy.

During the blockade of Leningrad, the small garrison of the Schlüsselburg Fortress (*Oreshek*—"Nut" was its old Russian name) on the shore of Lake Ladoga was a stronghold of resistance. Under constant shelling, it defended the approaches to the city for five hundred days, with the Red Banner, pierced by bullets and shrapnel, hoisted above. This symbol served to multiply the garrison's strength.

Many instances of conspicuous valor have occurred on the battlefield in attempts to save the Unit Colors. For example: on the night of February 2, 1945, headed by Colonel Georgi Lenev, the 902nd Regiment of the 248th Rifle Division force-crossed the river Oder and entrenched itself on the seized bank. At dawn it was bombed from the air and battered with artillery fire. The Soviet troops had to resist the attack of two infantry regiments and 30 tanks. Fighting was severe. An enemy battalion broke through and surrounded the building whose basement housed the regiment's headquarters. Displaying self-control and tenacity, Colonel Lenev commanded defenses and continued to direct the actions of his battalions transmitting his orders by radio.

Later, he was to tell his own story of what happened: "That was the hardest fighting for the regiment during the entire war. On February 3, we repulsed 28 Nazi attacks. Only 150 officers and men remained in action in the 1st battalion... Everyone in the basement displayed courage. We were suffocating, some lost consciousness. I felt sick, too. But what helped was the Regiment Colors—it sort of gave me a second wind. Just think how long it had been

with us and what we had passed through! I broke out in cold sweat just thinking of the danger it was in. And all those who were there with me in that critical time were terribly concerned about it. Its loss meant the end of the regiment..."¹

Then Colonel Lenev decided to draw his own artillery's fire on the headquarters. A powerful blast shook the building destroying the Nazis surrounding it. Enemy attacks were repulsed. At the risk of their own lives, the brave men saved the Regiment Colors. It was under this Colors that the regiment, commanded by Lenev, after a series of offensive actions, entered Berlin.

In peacetime, during large-scale military exercises and maneuvers, the Colors are brought to the site of the action and inspire men to brave, daring and decisive operation. Their presence in the units is a factor motivating the men to show best performance in their training and military service.

Many rituals feature the Unit Colors. It precedes the leading column at reviews and parades, is brought forward when soldiers come on duty, appears at ceremonious meetings dedicated to state holidays, anniversaries of the unit or of the arms of the service, in award ceremonies, and other festive occasions.

In all cases, protection of the Unit Colors is a primary function of the personnel. Standing guard by the Colors is the most sought-after and important post. Cadets or soldiers who have distinguished themselves in some way are given this honor. One of the awards granted to soldiers, sailors, sergeants and petty officers is to have their photograph taken against the Unit Colors.

On the warships of the Soviet Navy the Naval Flag acts as the Unit Colors. It indicates the state identity and immunity of a ship and symbolizes the readiness of Soviet seamen to defend the independence and sovereignty of their country at sea frontiers against any encroachments of the enemies. Just like the Unit Colors, the Naval Flag is a symbol of combat valor and glory reminding each seaman of his sacred duty to display courage and skill and not to spare himself when defending his country.

In action or at the appearance of the enemy, the State

¹ *Krasnaya Zvezda*, March 18, 1980.

Flag of the USSR is hoisted alongside with the Naval Flag.

Never and under no circumstances do Soviet ships lower their flags as a sign of surrender. Protection of the State Flag and the Naval Flag is the sacred duty of each seaman and the crew at large.

The Soviet Armed Forces foster the servicemen's loyalty to the Unit Colors or Naval Flag and to their unit. The history of a unit or ship, its awards and feats, and the heroes educated and trained there are discussed at talks with the young servicemen.

Soviet young men consider it an honor to serve in guards units. These are the foremost units and formations of the Armed Forces. To do one's military service there is both an honor and a great responsibility. Higher demands are made of their personnel in combat training, discipline and morale, in daily activities, military exercises and on marches.

A tradition has been evolved of initiating the new draftees into the guards. First the young men learn about the history of the unit, its most distinguished men and commanding officers. After the men have passed a course of training and taken part in field exercises, shooting practice and marches, proving their worth and amenability to discipline, they receive a guards badge. The receiving of a badge is a ceremonious and festive occasion.

A similar ritual takes place when an officer arrives at a guards unit from a military school. At officers' meetings and reviews and in the presence of the Unit Colors guards veterans talk about the combat past of the unit, the awards it has won, its heroes, the features of service in it and the achievements of its personnel. Then the commanding officer hands the young officers the guards badges and congratulates them on the honor of serving in the Soviet guards.

Military Rituals

Military service is harsh and demanding. This is only natural for it trains men for most arduous duties: war, armed defense of the country and achieving victory over a strong and merciless enemy. To survive the ordeal of war, one must experience all the hardships involved in military service and combat training.

But, of course, military service in the Soviet Armed For-

ces is not all hardship. Young men become also aware of the significance of what they are doing, and the romantic and heroic quality of their military service. These feelings are fostered to a large extent by military rituals and ceremonies, which form an integral part of life in the army. These are reviews, regimental and battalion evening roll-calls and taking over the duty of watch, or guarding the state frontiers. These occasions have a certain festive quality, which highlights the special significance of all aspects of military service, its peculiar manly beauty.

The place of honor among Soviet military rituals belongs to parades of troops and warships on the occasion of state holidays, anniversaries and other red-letter dates. The most popular parade is that in Moscow's Red Square in front of the Lenin Mausoleum.

The first parade of the newly formed Red Army, born in the battles against the enemies of the Revolution, took place in Moscow on May 1, 1918, in Khodynka Field. At that time, this area was on the outskirts of the city.

After greeting the May Day demonstration Lenin came to watch the parade. He talked to Red Army men, pilots and technicians, made an inspection of the troops and congratulated them on the holiday. During the parade, he warmly greeted the troops marching past.

Since that time, military parades in Moscow have become a tradition and are held in Red Square.

After the victorious conclusion of the Great Patriotic War a Victory Parade was held in Moscow on June 24, 1945. Composite regiments headed by their commanding officers and political workers and representing all Fronts, marched past the Lenin Mausoleum across Red Square. Unit Colors, which had been covered with glory in victorious battles, floated above them. Two hundred Soviet soldiers threw the standards and flags of the Nazi defeated army down at the foot of the Mausoleum. The Victory Parade was an impressive demonstration of the might of the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces, the glory of the Soviet people and their valiant defenders.

By taking part in military parades in Moscow, the capitals of Union republics, other cities, towns and garrisons, units and formations, the troops reveal to the Soviet people, the government and the Communist Party the strength of the

Soviet Armed Forces and their constant readiness to competently perform their military duty.

A tradition that has evolved in the postwar years is the ceremony of taking over the duty by anti-aircraft and air force personnel.

...Early in the morning, a file of men stands at attention at a missile launching site. A band is present. The Unit Colors is hoisted at the right flank. Out of the silence, the command is sounded:

"The shift on duty, take over the duty of guarding the air frontiers of the Soviet Motherland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

The names of men taking over the duty are read out. This serves to underscore the personal responsibility of each man to conscientiously perform his duties, obey orders and instructions of commanding officers and safeguard the security of the Soviet state.

Two men who have distinguished themselves in the course of their service are entrusted with hoisting the flag of the unit on duty. The State Anthem of the USSR is played. The flag is raised, which indicates that everything is ready for the performance of combat mission: the equipment is in perfect order, as are weapons, instruments and installations. Officers and men are all set for the performance of their duty.

Accompanied by the sounds of the band, the shift on duty marches past the busts of their predecessors, participants in the Great Patriotic War, past the obelisk representing a sky-bound rocket. The Unit Colors is carried away to the music of a march. The red flag of the unit on duty will float above the positions day and night reminding the men of their duty: to guard the air frontiers of the Soviet Union.

Among the impressive rituals staged in the Army and Navy is the handing out of state awards received by units and formations for outstanding service to the country or extra-high standards of combat readiness. The day of the ceremony is declared a holiday, the men are lined up on the parade ground, and the award is pinned to the Colors. This is a day of sports competitions, amateur art concerts and performances given by visiting art groups.

The Soviet Union has traditions which have a particular significance for every Soviet citizen. One such tradition is

paying homage to the people who have performed heroic deeds in the military service of their country. This serves to keep alive the memory of these men and women and pays tribute to their immortal courage in sacrificing their life for the freedom and happiness of their country.

Contributions and assistance from the public, work collectives and war veterans has made it possible to erect over 270 major monuments of state significance and over 35,000 obelisks and other smaller memorials.

Perhaps the most significant memorial which reflects the nation's gratitude is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Kremlin Wall in Moscow. The remains of the Unknown Soldier were brought from the vicinity of the village of Kryukovo, 41 km away from Moscow. An obelisk has been erected there. This was the line along which Nazi troops bursting towards Moscow were stopped and then defeated. "Your name is unknown. Your feat is immortal", reads the inscription on the red granite.

Impressive monuments to heroes of the Great Patriotic War have been erected at the Piskarevskoye Cemetery in Leningrad, on Mamayev Hill in Volgograd, in the Brest Hero Fortress, on the bank of the Dnieper in Kiev, on Sapun Mountain in Sevastopol and in many other places. Standing on Poklonnaya Hill in Moscow as a symbol of eternal glory of the Soviet people and a memorial to the country's valiant soldiers will be the grand Victory Monument.

Monuments and other memorial sites have given rise to numerous new Soviet traditions. On national holidays, people both young and old come to pay homage to the war heroes. Here, young men and women receive their Komsomol membership cards, and children join the Young Pioneers. Young soldiers take their Military Oath here, and troops march under the Unit Colors pledging to enhance the glory of the heroes with fresh achievements.

Soviet army traditions are handed down from generation to generation. They encourage Soviet people, young men serving in the Army or Navy to spare no effort in ensuring their socialist country's happiness and better future and its peace and security.

CHAPTER 6

THE STRONGHOLD OF PEACE AND THE SECURITY OF THE MOTHERLAND

*Combat Capacity of the Soviet Army—Living Up to the Requirements of the Day * The Weaponry in Capable Hands * The Morale of the Army as a Weapon in Its Own Right * Combat Fraternity of the Peoples and Armies*

Living Up to the Requirements of the Day

The headway made by the socialist economy, science and technology in the postwar years has made it possible to equip the Soviet Armed Forces with the latest types of weaponry fully capable of meeting the requirements of modern warfare. The social and political advances made by Soviet society have further enhanced the morale of the troops, serving to bring out the more valuable traits in the men's make-up. Those who come to serve in the Army or Navy usually have a good standard of political, general and technical education.

As weaponry and ways of its use developed, army organization improved, too. All armed services and arms as well as special purpose troops and logistics developed on a planned and balanced basis, and the methods of combat training and troop control improved. All in all, this served to build up the combat potential of the Soviet Armed Forces, placing them among the most powerful in the world. In their technical equipment, combat training, political education and morale, they fully live up to the standards set by the nature of modern warfare and modern battle.

However, the need to further improve the Soviet Armed Forces still exists due to the instability of the international

situation. The Communist Party, the Government, and the people cannot but take this into consideration.

As the CPSU Program states, "The Party will continue to make constant efforts to ensure that the combat potential of the Soviet Armed Forces is a firm union of military skill, a high level of technical capability, ideological staunchness, organisation and discipline of the officers and men and their loyalty to their patriotic and internationalist duty."

The Armed Forces of the USSR comprise five armed services: the Strategic Missile Forces, the Land Forces, the Air Defense Forces, the Air Force and the Navy; they also incorporate the Logistics of the Armed Forces and Civil Defense headquarters and its forces.

The Strategic Missile Forces

This is the youngest armed service, which is the foundation of the Armed Forces' might and the principal means of containment of aggressive imperialist forces. The CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government took the decision on their establishment in December 1959.

The Strategic Missile Forces have powerful nuclear and thermonuclear missiles. They are capable, within minutes, of covering a distance of many thousands of kilometers and hitting major strategic targets on an aggressor's territory.

Strategic nuclear weapons have enormous destructive capacity, high degree of combat readiness, accuracy and a virtually unlimited range of action. They are capable of simultaneously hitting many strategic targets and swiftly accomplishing combat assignments, their performance being not affected by weather conditions, time of day or season.

A large number of units of the Strategic Missile Forces were set up on the basis of renowned artillery and guards rocket mortar regiments and have "inherited" their honorary titles. One of the units of the Strategic Missile Forces is the guards missile unit. Its predecessor was a regiment of guards rocket mortars, the famous *katyushas*, which began its combat history in the battle of Moscow.

The powerful Soviet missile weapons are in safe hands. Serving in the Strategic Missile Forces are excellent officers

and men. They are devoted to their homeland and have a high standard of technical and moral-psychological training. Nearly all of the men serving in this armed service have a higher or secondary education; about 80 percent of the officers are graduates of higher military command or engineer schools, all are highly skilled specialists. Over 90 percent of the force are Party or Komsomol members. These are people with firm ideological principles, a sound military-technical education who are fully capable of competently performing any combat mission. It is a telling fact that even in peacetime many of these men have been decorated with Orders and medals for excellent performance and a high level of technical skill. The best missile units have won high state awards.

Over the past few years the Missile Forces' combat readiness has risen immeasurably. Suffice it to say that during the stage of their formation it took several hours to prepare a missile for launching, now it takes a matter of seconds. Missile Forces today are equipped with the latest missile systems, and nearly all the processes involved in their launching and combat use are automated. Reliability, accuracy and efficiency of the weaponry have increased substantially. According to experts, at present not a single military-technical device can give an aggressor a chance to deal a "disabling" strike.

Proof of the Strategic Missile Forces' combat readiness is ground alert. This is a specific type of military service which in fact entails the continuous performance of a combat mission in peacetime conditions.

Before ground alert is sounded each crew member is thoroughly prepared. Their training takes place in conditions that are geared to duplicate those of real combat. Men are given a chance to test their knowledge and skills in using weapons, and to learn to coordinate their actions as a team.

Ground alert or a special type of combat readiness at missile launching sites is calculated to swiftly put into action the entire sophisticated system that is capable of reliably shielding the country from aggression.

Soviet people refer to the Missile Forces as the shield to the homeland and contribute what they can to maintain their high combat capacity and constant combat readiness.

The Land Forces

While the Missile Forces represent the youngest armed service of the army, the Land Forces are its oldest, one might even say, ancient armed service, which came into existence many centuries ago. For decades the Land Forces formed the core of the Soviet Army. In the years of the Civil War they were instrumental in routing the interventionists and the White Guards. In the Great Patriotic War, the Land Forces made up over 80 percent of the Armed Forces personnel. In close cooperation with the Air Force, the Air Defense Forces and the Navy, they played a decisive role in defeating Nazi Germany.

In the postwar years the character of the Land Forces has changed considerably, the most drastic change being their equipment with thermonuclear weapons. Today they are armed with missiles of various types. They considerably expand the Land Force's capacity to hit important targets at a great distance. Combat efficiency of other types of weaponry has also increased significantly.

Cooperating with other armed services, the Land Forces are capable of combat actions destroying enemy groups of forces, strike deep into enemy terrain repulsing the attack of enemy troops and large airborne and amphibious landing forces, and holding on to captured territories, areas and positions.

The Land Forces include motorized infantry units, tank troops, missile forces and artillery, air defense forces of the Land Forces, as well as units of special-purpose troops: engineers, chemical, signals and electronic troops, topographers and geodesists, etc., and logistical and administrative support.

The most numerous branch of the Land Forces are *motorized infantry units*. Their origins go back to the "queen of the battlefield", "Mother infantry", as this oldest, most numerous and, for a long time, principal arms of the service is known.

On the battlefields of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet infantry, officially known as rifle troops, fought bravely under its Unit Colors. It fought heroically against the enemy in bloody defensive and offensive action and reached Berlin

in victory. Many infantry divisions were honored with guards titles and honorary names and decorated with Orders.

Improved weaponry and greater mobility characterize rifle troops today. Even during the prewar years, steps were being taken to mount the infantry on vehicles and armored cars. At that time this was accomplished only in part. In 1939, the first motorized rifle division was formed in the Red Army. It had 1,400 vehicles, 58 armored cars, and 37 tanks. In the war years the shortage of cars and tanks hampered the development of motorized infantry.

Motorization developed at a great pace in the postwar years. In 1963, a renovated arms of the service gained the independent status of motorized infantry. The men were mounted not merely on lorries but on armored personnel carriers (APC), fast vehicles with good cross-country ability. Later, the troops received the infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) which have kept the old name of the arms as a token of respect for the "queen of the battlefield". This is an armored full-track combat vehicle, highly mobile, with excellent cross-country ability, protecting the crew from bullets and shrapnel. Inside the vehicle are the crew and a section of riflemen, who can deliver fire through side slits while the vehicle is in motion and, if need be, promptly leave the vehicle and continue firing. The crew supports these men with automatic gun and machine-gun fire. The IFVs can cross streams and effectively hit armored vehicles and low-flying aircraft and helicopters.

The equipment of motorized infantry by the APC and IFV has dramatically increased their mobility and, what is of great importance, their invulnerability to weapons of mass destruction. They can cover hundreds of kilometers a day, closely follow tanks and cooperate with them in offensive combat. The daily rate of advance approaches several dozen kilometers.

Motorized infantry comprises tactical missile and tank units. But the motorization of the infantry is not the only important factor. Motorized infantry units are equipped with various types of artillery pieces and mortars, anti-tank guided missiles, surface-to-air missiles (SAM), efficient means of reconnaissance, control and logistic support of combat operations. These have increased manyfold their

fighting strength and expanded their operational and tactical range.

The firepower of the Land Forces is concentrated in *missile troops and the artillery*. Missile troops of the Land Forces can deliver powerful destructive strikes against the enemy on the battlefield or deep in the rear at a distance of hundreds of kilometers.

Their chief purpose is to destroy nuclear offensive means, aircraft on the airfields and enemy air defense installations, and to annihilate large troop concentrations, command posts, military depots and other major objectives. In maritime regions they can be used to hit the strike force of the enemy's fleet, his amphibious task force and naval bases.

Missile troops of the Land Forces are equipped with missiles, which have been developed and improved from year to year. The weight and size of missiles have decreased, and their mobility, range of action and accuracy have increased. Methods of their exploitation and their control system are being constantly improved.

The modern artillery is a formidable force. Its firepower and maneuverability have grown substantially in the postwar years. Increasingly sophisticated weaponry is being adopted, including anti-tank guns and recoilless cannons, multiple rocket artillery mounts and mortars of various calibers with considerably more powerful, accurate and long-distance ammunition. Artillery methods of transportation have been updated, too.

In anti-tank combat, the artillery is less important than anti-tank guided missiles. These missiles are capable of hitting targets at great distances and with a high degree of accuracy, penetrating the armor of any modern tanks.

The introduction of the latest artillery ordnance has substantially added to the Land Forces' firepower. While in 1939 the weight of a division's artillery and mortar volley equalled 1.7 tones, by the late 1960s it had increased to 53 tons.

The main strike force of the Land Forces is concentrated in *tank troops*, which came into being during the Civil War. At that time the first auto-armor and armored car units were set up, making an important contribution to the defeat of the interventionists and the White Guards. In the years of

the Great Patriotic War the Soviet tank troops grew into a formidable force and were tempered in the bitter fighting against the Nazi hordes. They had an edge over the enemy tanks in fighting efficiency, while their crews showed unparalleled courage and a high level of military skills. Hundreds of thousands of tankmen have been decorated with Orders and medals, and 1,300 made Heroes of the Soviet Union.

There are tank troop units today which brought glory to their colors in the war years, among them the Guards Kantemirovka Division, "heir" to the 4th Guards Tank Corps, which fought the entire way from Voronezh to Prague. In the postwar years, the Kantemirovka Division has invariably been among the front-rank units and always participated in the military parades in Red Square.

At present, tank troops are a powerful force. They are highly mobile and have the greatest invulnerability to the destructive effect of nuclear and conventional weapons. Modern Soviet tanks have heavy armor protection, powerful armaments and reliable control systems. Thanks to powerful engines, they have high speed and endurance.

Tank troops are designed to conduct warfare primarily on the main directions to deliver powerful and deep strikes against the enemy. They are able to make the best use of the results of nuclear and artillery strikes and, launching rapid offensive, promptly to achieve the final objectives of the battle and the operation. The fighting capacity of tank units and formations allows them to conduct vigorous offensive action day and night, greatly disengaged from other troops, to crush large enemy forces in encounter battles. They are also capable of crossing large areas that have been subjected to radioactive contamination and cross streams; to promptly take up defensive positions and resist the attack of superior enemy forces.

Great advances in the postwar years have been made by the country's *air defense forces*, which have acquired the status of an independent arms. Air defense forces are designed to protect groups of forces and their logistical support units from air attacks. They comprise anti-aircraft missile troops, anti-aircraft artillery, and electronic warfare units. The air defense of the Land Forces is able, independently or in cooperation with the air defense of other armed serv-

ices, to destroy piloted and remote-controlled aircraft and combat enemy airborne task force, conduct radar reconnaissance and sound air-raid warnings.

Air defense missile units are equipped with highly mobile and efficient air defense missile systems. Anti-aircraft artillery is multi-barrelled, have a rapid rate of fire and is fully motorized; firing is automated.

These are the principle arms of the Land Forces.

Airborne troops hold a special place of importance in the Armed Forces as an independent arm. They are sometimes called the winged infantry, since they are airlifted into the enemy rear but fight on land using, for the most part, the same armaments as the Land Forces.

Intended for action in the enemy rear, airborne troops are capable of dealing surprise attacks against enemy groups of forces, seizing and holding important areas in its deep rear, disrupting state and military administration, assisting their own advancing troops and destroying major objectives.

Soviet airborne troops were formed before the Great Patriotic War. In August 1930, at military exercises near Voronezh, a group of armed paratroopers were airdropped in the "enemy" rear and successfully carried out their assignment, seizing the designated objective. During the Great Patriotic War airborne troops took part in many battles and displayed exemplary courage and military skill. Under harsh winter conditions, in January-February 1943, a 10,000-strong landing force was dropped behind the lines of the Nazi Vyazma army group. For over five months Soviet officers and men valiantly fought in the enemy rear, covered more than 600 km in fighting and liberated about 200 populated centers. Approximately 15,000 enemy officers and men were killed and a large amount of weaponry destroyed.

The postwar years witnessed the rapid development of airborne troops. Along with improving organization, their equipment was updated. Now the troops have modern tanks, self-propelled artillery guns, anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, combat vehicles and the latest small arms. Excellent transport aircraft and helicopters are used to land personnel and materiel.

At the Dvina exercises in 1970, a large group of troops was airdropped for the first time from An-22 heavy trans-

port planes. Upon assault landing, the paratroopers immediately engaged in combat and successfully performed their combat mission. In the spring of 1975, together with An-22s, new Il-76 transport aircraft were used. Parachuting of troops was followed by that of combat vehicles of paratroopers which the men used promptly to attack the "enemy".

Paratroopers also distinguished themselves at the Zapad-81 exercises. Particular courage and skill were demonstrated by paratroopers Leonid Manokha and Alexei Uporov. As they jumped, an air current threw them together, and their lines became tangled, causing their parachutes to begin to collapse. With commendable presence of mind, the paratroopers courageously fought for survival. Finally, Manokha managed to open his spare parachute, with which both men landed. Despite the stress and the fact that they landed hard, they pulled themselves together and hastened to join their company to take part in performing the combat mission.

The Air Defense Forces

As distinct from the air defense forces of the Land Forces, there also exist the Air Defense Forces as an independent armed service. They are intended to protect administrative centers, industrial regions, groups of armed forces and other major military and civilian targets from air raids.

The Air Defense Forces of the USSR were established in the years of the Civil War. At that time the Red Army had a small number of anti-aircraft artillery batteries and a few fighter aircraft units, which took part in the fighting against the aviation of interventionists and the White Guards.

By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the country already had powerful air defense forces. They protected major industrial centers, important regions and objectives from air attacks. During massive Nazi air raids, Moscow skies were defended by 600 fighter planes, 1,000 anti-aircraft guns, about 350 anti-aircraft machine guns, and over 600 searchlights. Later, the number of anti-aircraft weapons in Moscow almost doubled. The Nazi command persisted in its effort to raze Moscow to the ground from the air, but Soviet anti-aircraft gunners foiled the enemy attempt. In the

autumn of 1941, more than 1,300 Nazi aircraft were shot down near Moscow.

Great courage and skill was displayed by pilots and anti-aircraft gunners during the fighting at Leningrad and Murmansk. During the war, the Air Defense Forces destroyed more than 7,300 enemy aircraft.

In the postwar years, the purpose and mission of the Air Defense Forces further gained in importance. The Armed Forces of the USA and NATO are being equipped with increasingly more powerful weapons of air attack, which are designed to be used against major administrative-political and economic centers and regions of the USSR. The Soviet Air Defense Forces must be prepared to repel any air attack.

For this reason, it is important to maintain the Air Defense Forces in a state of high combat readiness. Even in peacetime, they fulfil an important state function, constantly guarding the country's air space and ready to repulse an air attack at any time.

The Air Defense Forces comprise anti-aircraft missile troops, fighter aviation and electronic troops.

Anti-aircraft missile troops are equipped with anti-aircraft missile systems of various purposes. They are capable of hitting any modern means of air attack from top distances, at high and low altitudes and supersonic speeds.

Anti-aircraft missiles are infinitely superior to all hitherto existing air defense weapons. In the past war it took from 400 to 600 shells to destroy one plane, now one or two missiles can shoot down a jet plane.

The fighter aviation of the Air Defense Forces is designed to cover major sectors, regions and objectives against an enemy air attack. It includes fighter aviation and auxiliary aviation units, and performs its combat missions in cooperation with anti-aircraft missile forces. The fighter aviation division is equipped with all-weather supersonic missile-carrying fighter interceptors, which are fitted with powerful missile weapons and sophisticated radar equipment. These aircraft are capable of destroying cruise missiles, missile-carrying aircraft, and other air targets within a wide range of altitudes and speeds and under any meteorological conditions.

Electronic troops play an important role in the Air De-

fense Forces. Their purpose is the early detection of enemy air attack means and warning air defense means. Radar stations allow them to detect any means of air attack even at considerable distances and despite heavy electronic jamming, identify them, define their location with a high degree of accuracy and immediately issue missile troops and pilots the data required for the destruction of these means. This sophisticated and effective equipment is operated by highly skilled personnel.

The Air Defense Forces' personnel are keenly aware of their responsibility towards the country and are constantly improving their skills. The role of technical training and engineer qualifications in the Air Defense Forces cannot be overestimated. Over half of the officers are qualified engineers or technicians.

The Air Force

This armed service can perform a wide range of air operations: deliver powerful blows at large enemy's land and naval forces and major objectives; cover the troops and warships and support them from the air; air-lift troops, weaponry and cargoes; conduct air reconnaissance, etc.

The Soviet Air Force is equipped with the latest aircraft of various types and designation and with high performance, powerful weapons, and effective means of enemy detection and fire control. They are capable of conducting highly dynamic air operations, efficiently penetrating the enemy air defense and performing a variety of combat missions both independently and in cooperation with other armed services.

The Air Force is made up of long-range, frontline and transport aviation.

The long-range aviation is equipped with supersonic missile carriers and bombers with a long range of action. Air-launched missiles of various types serve as their principal weapon. These can hit land and naval targets without entering the enemy's air defense zone of operation. In addition to missiles, bombers carry air bombs of various designation. Long-range aviation units are designed to hit targets deep in the enemy rear by delivering massive strikes under any weather conditions and at any time of day. The range of their operation is extended by in-flight refuelling.

The frontline aviation is equipped with supersonic all-weather fighters, fighter-bombers and combat and cargo helicopters carrying missiles and bombs of various designation. Its goal is to strike enemy aircraft at airfields and in the air, support the actions of land and naval forces, and conduct air reconnaissance.

Great advances have been made by *transport aviation*. It has at its disposal modern long-range aircraft with a high cargo-carrying capacity, and is thus able swiftly to transport troops and weaponry across large distances. This renders large troop contingents highly mobile. Transport aviation can drop or land large forces and their weaponry, including tanks, artillery and missiles, deep in the enemy rear.

The Soviet military aviation is as old as the Red Army itself. The first socialist air units fought in the Civil War, and they formed the core of the powerful Air Force of the USSR.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet aviation industry produced over 130,000 planes, Soviet pilots flew over 3 million combat missions inflicting tremendous manpower and material losses on the enemy. In air battles and on airfields, they destroyed 57,000 Nazi aircraft.

In the postwar years, Soviet aviation made a tremendous leap in its development. Planes now fly at supersonic speeds and great distances at a wide range of altitudes. They are also equipped with powerful missiles. The advances in aerodynamics and gas dynamics and the development of new high strength materials and sophisticated radioelectronic equipment have made it possible to build aircraft that can fly at 3,000 km/ph or even faster. The Air Force possesses variable geometry wing aircraft capable of vertical take-off and landing.

The Soviet pilots, engineers and technicians, officers and men serving in the Air Force display a responsible and conscientious attitude to their training and the performance of their duties and maintain the high combat readiness of their units and formations.

The Navy

Together with the Land Forces, this is one of the oldest armed services.

The Baltic Fleet played a crucial part in the October

Socialist Revolution, courageously guarding Petrograd and thus blocking the way for interventionists who strove to strangle the revolution. Such courage was also displayed by the seamen of the Black Sea Fleet and many flotillas fighting against interventionists and the White Guards. About 75,000 revolutionary seamen fought with land troops.

A strong Navy was established in the Soviet Union between the two wars. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, it numbered a thousand warships of various types, including more than 200 submarines.

The Navy made a sizable contribution to the struggle against the Nazi invaders. Seamen displayed a high level of military skills, courage and truly mass heroism in battles, destroying enemy warships and transports, and when guarding their own communications. They also vigorously supported the actions of land forces. About half a million seamen fought heroically on land, liberating both the Soviet Union and countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe from the invaders. The Pacific Fleet and the Amur Flotilla took part in defeating militarist Japan and the liberation of South Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, South Korea and Manchuria.

In the postwar years, the main trend has been towards building a qualitatively new, nuclear-missile Navy. Soviet shipbuilders have used the latest achievements in science and technology to design and build modern warships of various types and designation. At present, the Navy has highly effective means of combat, including nuclear-powered submarines, modern combatant ships and missile-carrying naval aviation. These are fully equipped to perform the most complicated missions involved in safeguarding the security of the Soviet Union on the high seas. There is virtually no area of any ocean in the world where its ships cannot sail.

The core of the Navy's strike force is composed of *nuclear-powered submarines* armed with long-range ballistic missiles and launched from under water. These are capable of carrying either nuclear or conventional charges. Together with Strategic Missile Forces, the nuclear-powered missile submarine fleet forms the basis of Soviet defense capability.

Nuclear-powered missile carriers have considerable endur-

ance, which allows them to stay for long periods in any ocean region and, under combat conditions, deliver missile strikes from under water against major targets located either on land or on the surface of the sea. The Navy has multi-purpose nuclear-powered submarines armed with torpedoes and other naval weaponry.

On long missions far away from their shores Soviet seamen improve their theoretical knowledge and combat skills. Back in 1962 the crew of the *Leninist Komsomol* nuclear-powered submarine of the Northern Fleet twice visited the North Pole on government missions. The submarine sailed under the harshest of conditions, mostly under Arctic ice several metres thick. Every member of the crew displayed courage, endurance, and a high level of skills in operating the equipment and weaponry.

In 1966 a unit of Soviet nuclear-powered submarines sailed around the world, covering 45,000 km without surfacing once in the course of six weeks. They travelled through extremely difficult waters, braving strong currents, ice fields and icebergs in the area of the Antarctic.

Missile-carrying and anti-submarine naval aviation constitutes one of the main forces of the Navy. Just as the rest of the Navy, it can operate in ocean war theaters and has a long range of action. The ship-based aircraft and helicopters have substantially enhanced the Navy's strike force and mobility. Missile-carrying aircraft can strike targets at great distances and at top speed. They are equipped with various types of missile and efficient target-detection facilities. Anti-submarine aviation units have aircraft and helicopters armed with equipment to detect and destroy enemy submarines.

Surface ships of various types have become more sophisticated. Soviet seamen are proud to operate such excellent, powerful ships, which incorporate the best of Soviet technology. Examples are the guided missile cruisers *Slava* and *Admiral Fokin*, anti-submarine cruisers *Minsk* and *Leninograd*, large anti-submarine ships *Krasny Kavkaz* and *Vasili Chapayev*, and patrol ships *Rezki* and *Zharki*.

The Navy comprises coastal missile-artillery units whose purpose is to provide reliable defense of the country's coastline, major naval and front objectives, and coastal communication lines.

Soviet marines maintain glorious traditions of the Navy. Their purpose is to capture the enemy coastline either independently or in cooperation with land forces. The marines require sound training enabling the troops to take part in landings, seize beachheads and engage superior enemy forces. Marine units are equipped with the latest landing craft and powerful armaments which allow them to successfully perform the most difficult tasks. Among the latest means of marine's transportation are surface effect ships which make it possible to accomplish surface assault.

The necessary provisions for the activities of the troops, as well as for their lives and training, are supplied by the *Logistics of the Armed Forces*.

The functioning of the modern Army and Navy requires considerable amounts of fuel, ammunition, and food, whose stocks must be constantly replenished. In the years of the Great Patriotic War, the Fronts used up over 10 million tones of ammunition, more than 16 million tones of fuel, about 40 million tons of food and fodder. At present, these expenditures have increased and diversified. In addition, it is necessary to ensure military transportation, repairs of the equipment damaged in combat, evacuate the wounded and provide for their treatment, etc. All this is the responsibility of the logistics.

Throughout the postwar period the capacity of the logistical support has grown. They have become more mobile and are equipped with modern means of transportation, and diverse machinery and equipment. Logistical units have powerful trucks and special-purpose cars with high cross-country capacity, road vehicles, and loading and unloading mechanisms. Field medical service, the organization of food deliveries and daily provisions are efficiently and competently carried out.

The logistics also comprise *railway troops*, which provide all transportation facilities for the Army and Navy. In the Great Patriotic War, railway and special-purpose troops restored over 117,000 km of railways. Today these troops have been supplied with the latest equipment and continue competently to carry out their functions. Railway troops have made an important contribution to the construction of the Baikal-Amur Railway.

At present it is considered a task of state importance to

safeguard the security of the population, industrial objectives and cities against mass destruction and other offensive weapons of the enemy. This is the responsibility of *Civil Defense headquarters and forces*, which also take part in combating natural disasters.

Combat Training

Modern weapons and equipment make it possible for the Soviet Armed Forces to maintain high combat capability and readiness.

The production and introduction of qualitatively new types of weaponry have brought about drastic changes in virtually all areas of military theory and practice. Considerable changes have taken place in the organization and structure of the Armed Forces and ways of their development, as well as in the methods of preparation and conduct of combat operations. All in all, this has given rise to new problems in the preparing military personnel for war and made it necessary to revise substantially their training and education.

In Accordance with the Laws of Modern Warfare

Military science and the art of warfare face a number of tasks: to generalize and interpret new trends and patterns in the military field, to develop and introduce programs to train the Armed Forces for modern warfare, and to reach sound conclusions as to the character and ways of waging military operations.

Socialist military science is based on the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of war and the army, which reveals the class origins and essence of war, the social nature of the army, the dependence of the course and outcome of the war on economic, social and political factors. Military science considers the direct impact of these factors on preparations for and waging of the war, and makes research into the laws and patterns of armed struggle.

The basic principles of Soviet military science were laid by Lenin, who developed the fundamental propositions of the relationships between war and economics and politics and strategy, the role of the moral factor in modern war, and the foundations and principles of building of the new army. Lenin elaborated the foundations of the Soviet art of



Taking the Military Oath at a monument of military glory



Infantry fighting vehicles

Mounting combat vehicles
Missile troops in tactical training



A tank column on the march

Practice launching of missiles





Receiving a combat mission



A happy meeting after the exercises



From the deck of an aircraft carrier



Nuclear-powered submarines

Missile troops of the Land Forces



Getting ready for a training flight



Landing a task force



A political worker talking to the men



A conference of Komsomol activists



A veteran's story

A political education class



Leisure time

Building the Baikal-Amur Railway



Combat fraternity of the Warsaw
Treaty armies



Soviet and Afghan soldiers comparing
notes



Under the Unit Colors



Military parade in Red Square



Always on the guard, always on the alert

warfare as an integral part of military science. Lenin's ideas on the methods of waging war in defense of revolution are of immense value. He emphasized the significance of firmness, vigorous offensive action, fluidity of operations, sound choice of the direction of the main attack, concentration of forces at the decisive sector at the decisive time, the role of surprise, daring initiative, and heroism of the troops, consolidation of success and pursuing the enemy until its complete defeat.

Later, Soviet military science was developed both during wars to defend the socialist state and in peacetime. The development of military science is of particular importance today due to the growing complexity of all aspects in the military field and the need for new political thinking in dealing with them.

At present, Soviet military science, based as it is on the defensive character of Soviet military doctrine, attaches especially great importance to the questions involved in enhancing the combat readiness of the Armed Forces to rebuff enemy attack, which implies that it cannot be lower than the aggressor's readiness to unleash war.

Soviet theorists work to prevent the military superiority of the USA and NATO over the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and to equip the Soviet Armed Forces with the weapons that meet fully the standards set by modern warfare. They thoroughly examine and reckon with the development trends and the research in the military field abroad. The fact that imperialist powers are building and improving both weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons must be taken into consideration.

Military strategy, operational art and tactics are being developed and improved. Here, the stress is on finding the most efficient ways of preparing for and waging combat operations, making the best possible use of modern means of armed struggle. The tactics of ground fighting, the methods and means of operations carried out by surface craft and submarines, aviation, and air defense facilities, are being developed and improved.

Modern engagement requires much greater combat and technical training and that military personnel live up to high moral, political and physical standards. This has produced the need to intensify the training and education of the personnel

and, at the same time, set much higher standards as to the qualifications and educational abilities of the officer corps.

Soviet military science and the art of warfare are steadily developing and improving combat training methods and raising the men's moral and psychological standards and physical fitness.

The Soviet science of military education has defined the principles of personnel training which have proved their soundness and been further developed in the course of war. The most important among these are coordinating training and education with the demands made by the Party and with the patterns of military development; the unity of training and education, i.e. the need to achieve not only a high level of military skills but to foster positive moral-political and combat traits and a conscientious attitude towards military service and the performance of combat missions; developing of skills and qualifications which the men will need in modern war; developing activity, independent thinking and initiative; a systematic, consistent and integrated approach to training and education; testing and consolidating theoretical knowledge and skills in the course of practical training.

The training and education of the military personnel are designed to blend the combat, moral-political, psychological and physical traits of each man and each unit and, using this as the basis, to foster and achieve a high level of combat skills, moral stability and readiness to endure any hardship of the war, the ability to maintain combat activity, the will to win and preparedness to accomplish the combat mission whatever the cost under the most difficult conditions.

A great deal of importance is attached to the educational training of commanders and political workers. Curricula at military academies and schools include military pedagogy and military psychology. Both military-political, command and engineer higher educational establishments teach a course on Party-political work. This serves to raise educational standards of commanding officers.

Learning to Use the Weaponry

The large numbers of weapons and combat equipment possessed by modern armies have increased the importance of the military personnel's technical training. Both missile

and air defense and electronic troops emphasize technical skills above all others. The same is true of modern air units and naval ships, since they are equipped with sophisticated weapons systems, devices and equipment.

Combat and technical training differs from other forms of personnel training in a number of ways.

First, it is exceedingly diversified and specialized, due to the complexity and diversity of modern weapons and combat equipment and the consequent increase in the number of military skills and professions to be mastered by the people servicing and using this weaponry. While at the time of the Civil War there were only about twenty military specialities and in the Great Patriotic War a little over a hundred, at present the number has exceeded a thousand.

Second, to master modern weaponry and acquire the skills to both efficiently use it in combat and maintain it in a state of constant combat readiness, the soldier and the sailor must have sound theoretical knowledge of nuclear physics, chemistry, electronics, electrical engineering and radar, and to be able to read complex diagrams, use reference books and other technical literature. For servicemen in many arms, this knowledge must be quite substantial.

Third, the complexity and diversity of the weaponry create the need to make the training as intensive as possible. Young servicemen must learn how to use sophisticated mechanisms, equipment and instruments, to swiftly bring them to the state of combat readiness, carry out combat operations, make necessary repairs, i.e. to act so as not to exceed the rigid norms prescribed for the combat use of weaponry, combat vehicles and equipment. These norms reflect the dependence of the outcome of combat on the competence and swiftness of action of the personnel, when not only minutes but seconds may be of decisive significance. The increased importance of the time factor in modern warfare is carefully taken into consideration in all forms of combat training.

Modern weapons and combat equipment is mostly designed for collective use. It is put into action by a crew, team or a unit. This requires that each member of the crew be highly skilled. His training, promptness and competence may decide the success or failure of the entire crew and efficiency of the operation. The lack of precision, slowness

or error of one may cause the failure of all. On the other hand, collective use of the weaponry makes it extremely important for the crew to be able to coordinate their actions, to share responsibility and to work together smoothly. The men are educated to develop a sense of combat comradeship, learn to assist each other in combat and training, feel part of the unit where they serve, uphold its honor and promote its success. In units and on ships, it has now become the norm for one man to master two or more related specialities so that members of the section, crew, team or shift are interchangeable. Apart from his own organic speciality, each man also learns those of his fellow-soldiers and thus is able to replace them whenever the need arises.

The troops and fleets have adequate and constantly improving material and technical facilities: well appointed study centers, testing-grounds, firing ranges, classrooms, laboratories and training complexes. This serves to make the training, including field and practice firing, practice missile launching and bombing, more successful. Training unit classrooms have specimens of combat machines, devices and instruments, various training and other facilities.

A great deal is being done to improve training facilities. New comprehensive missile, aviation, tank and other training equipment, and new and better communications means at testing-grounds and firing ranges are being developed and introduced. Modern electronic equipment, optical, mechanical and other devices, better simulators and other equipment promoting training are being adopted for use. Army inventors and innovators are working together with industrial designers in this important field.

The Armed Forces have introduced a system of bonuses and rewards for the particularly skilful and competent use of weapons and combat equipment both in practice sessions and on the battlefield. Take, for example, proficiency ratings. A man doing active military service who has acquired certain skills and knowledge and is able to competently perform his professional duties within set time-limits may win a 3rd, 2nd or 1st class rating; officers, ensigns and warrant officers may win a master rating. Servicemen who have won a class rating have priority over others in receiving promotions and applying for military educational establishments. Men in active service, as well as ensigns and warrant

officers, receive an additional monthly bonus for a class rating.

Soviet servicemen show a very responsible attitude and diligence when learning to operate modern sophisticated equipment and weapons. The majority of the men in the Army and Navy win class ratings, and many officers win master rating in their chosen profession.

Military Exercises—a Test of Proficiency

Combat training in the Army and Navy is designed to teach skills needed during war. This means that the conditions of the service should, if possible, duplicate those of real combat conditions, that men must be trained to conduct combat operations using all modern weapons and to be able to resist a strong enemy equipped with the latest weapons.

Missile troops are taught to maintain high combat readiness and to be capable to make accurate strikes against targets under any conditions. This is the purpose of all training sessions, exercises and everyday army duty in the Missile Forces. To improve their knowledge and combat skills, the men make the best possible use of ground alerts, regulation servicing of missile systems, training sessions, work with simulators and practice missile launchings. Each launching of a missile on a testing-ground is an important event in the life and training of missile troops. It is both an educational experience and a test under conditions that closely resemble those of real combat. As a rule, Soviet missile troops perform their duty with honor. All practice launchings are executed with a high degree of accuracy and merit good or excellent grades.

For servicemen in the Land Forces, pilots and seamen combat training is designed to improve skills. This is achieved during land exercises, training flights and ocean and sea cruises.

The troops of the Land Forces persistently improve their combat skills. All tactical exercises, drills, firing practice, and training sessions where the men learn to operate machinery and equipment are intensive and arduous, and are conducted under conditions very close to those of combat. Exercises make it possible to test the standard of the men's technical skills, their theoretical knowledge and

ability to solve tactical problems, their marksmanship and physical fitness. They serve to mould, promote and consolidate combat, moral and psychological traits in the officers and men.

The large amount of equipment in the tank forces and the growing complexity of the tasks they are given in combat have substantially increased the demands made of tankmen. A modern tank is not merely characterized by heavy armor protection, powerful armaments, high speed and mobility. To make the most of these advantages, the machine is fitted with optical, electric and electronic control equipment and weapons stabilizers. These must be thoroughly mastered, as well as driving technique, firing on the move, making a maneuver in the field, in the mountains, in town streets and thick forests, and the skill of stream-crossing. Tankmen master these skills in classrooms, on terrain mock-ups, in-tank training areas, at testing-ranges, and in joint exercises with missile troops, infantrymen, artillerymen and pilots. The troops have been making every effort to win proficiency ratings, attain complete interchangeability of crew members, maintain machinery in perfect order and operate it most competently and carefully.

Motorized infantry units enhance their skill in exercises. Let us picture modern ground battle on a small sector at a major exercise. The attacking units have been ordered to break through a strong deliberate "enemy" defense line with numerous missiles, artillery weapons, tanks, anti-tank weapons, sophisticated engineering obstacles, etc. The defense line is made even stronger due to the fact that it runs along a river. The offensive has been preceded by thorough all-round preparations: swift marches, improved troop cooperation, a study of combat missions, and reconnaissance.

The fighting begins, and everything is set in motion. The "enemy" defenses are showered with thousands of missiles, shells and mines. The roar is deafening. Artillery barrage has enabled the infantry to thrust forward, pursuing the "enemy" at first in combat vehicles up to the next line and then, dismounting, they wiped out individual pockets of resistance. In the meantime, other infantry units in combat vehicles dashed through the breach and were followed by tanks. Having crushed the "enemy" in meeting engagement,

they crossed the river. Meanwhile an airborne and amphibious force landed behind enemy lines. Immediately upon landing, paratroopers joined the fighting. The marines daringly seized the coastline after being brought ashore by surface effect ships.

The "enemy", which had now assumed the defensive, did its best to demonstrate the skills, staunchness and flexibility of modern defense. The active use of artillery fire, maneuvers, swiftness and sudden attack—these features of modern combat were demonstrated by both sides. Commanders, soldiers and sailors of all specialties revealed their skills, initiative and daring. In the meantime, fighter planes were engaged in air combat, while helicopters supported the actions of land troops by missile strikes and bombings.

However, even given the complexity and intensity of the fighting, it should be remembered that this is practice combat which necessarily entailed the use of conventions and precautions. But in any case, the real action of the troops and a sophisticated system of simulation have made it possible to vividly recreate a picture of modern battle.

The major Caucasus-85 exercises, which took place in the mountains, were both instructive and interesting. Combat operations were held on mountain slopes, in narrow gorges, valleys cut lengthwise by rapid rivers. One of the participants in the exercises described one of the episodes:

"An attack was launched. A tank regiment made up of dozens of powerful armored vehicles dashed forward. Following it, motorized infantry regiment rode over the 'enemy' trenches on infantry fighting vehicles. Mortars, swiftly changing positions, delivered fire from different points. The overall picture was truly impressive. Combat was under way on vast territory on land and in the air.

"Below the clouds, fighters patrolled the skies, providing a cover shield for the troops. They prevented the 'enemy' from reaching the battlefield from the air. Bombers operated from medium and low altitudes. The efficiency of their fire was recorded by aircraft cameras, which showed the results of photo-machine-gun shooting: all targets were hit."

Pilots train a great deal in order to be able to meet the demands of modern air warfare. In exercises conducted under a variety of weather conditions, they train to support and cover their land forces both on the offensive and

defensive, combat enemy air defense means, conduct air reconnaissance and land assault forces. Cooperating with land forces, pilots learn to detect various objectives and targets and effectively hit them.

Like their fathers at the front 40 years ago, they demonstrate initiative, daring and decisiveness. These qualities were revealed by a missile carrier crew headed by Guards Lieutenant Boris Korotkov, for whom a routine practice flight proved almost a combat mission. Having performed the complicated navigation and target detection tasks set before it, the crew was heading back for the airfield. The plane was already landing when a powerful electric charge, a globe lightning, hit it. There was an explosion, the pit filled with smoke, and the plane's speed dropped sharply as the engine failed.

The commanding officer had just enough time to inform the flight operation officer and receive permission for the crew to bale out. They had only a few minutes before the plane would hit the ground and this was when the young pilot's training, technical skills, will and self-control came to his aid. He attempted to restart the engine, but failed. He tried again, and the turbine roared. The altitude was just 300 meters. Now the plane responded to the pilot's control and began to climb. When the aircraft landed, its fin was found to be damaged, and the fuselage was burned.

Soviet seamen are also trained under arduous conditions. Soviet ships sail in storms and hurricanes, under scorching heat and in harsh polar frosts, at any latitude of the World Ocean.

A combatant ship is fitted with highly sophisticated equipment. It can be competently operated only by those who have a good technical and special knowledge and can be counted on to remain calm in any situation. To a large extent, service in the Navy has a great deal in common with an engineer's work, and operation of the Soviet Navy in ocean theaters has produced a need for a new, broader way of thinking, a wider tactical and strategic outlook, and a more profound understanding of its objectives and responsibility to ensure the security of the homeland.

Soviet ships keep a vigilant watch in the Mediterranean. One such vessel is a modern combatant ship, an anti-submarine cruiser. It has covered thousands of miles and has spent

many days and nights detecting underwater "enemy" ships and engaging in large-scale shooting exercises. Several times, it had undertaken practice missile launching. On such occasions, specialists cooperate smoothly and busily at departments of ships; electrical engineers make sure that the vessel sails smoothly and maneuvers without a hitch. Radar operators are on guard to detect the target from top distance. Even swifter than called for, missile troops prepare the missiles for launching. The necessary decisions have been made, the commander gives precise and authoritative orders to the units. The result of the crew's smooth and competent action is outstanding: the launching has been executed perfectly; the target has been hit.

In remote oceans and in coastal waters, the crews of nuclear-powered submarines, officers and sailors of the missile cruisers, patrol and anti-submarine ships, missile motor boats, and other types of ships of the Soviet Navy improve their skills, develop their will and character. They are fully capable of operating in ocean war theaters in order to safeguard the security of their country.

Similar competence and sense of duty towards their country is displayed by officers and men who are performing their military service on land, from the Carpathian Mountains to the Kuril Islands, and from the regions within the Polar Circle to the Pamir Mountains.

Army Service in the USSR

Soviet officers and men are well aware that their service, combat training and political education are part of the work of the country at large. Their effort rates just as highly as that of workers, farmers, scientists, teachers or medicos. The army safeguards and defends the homeland, everything that has been created by the people, including that which is most important and precious—the freedom and independence of the socialist state. Servicemen regard their combat training programs and the tasks they set when improving their military skills as major state objectives.

Lenin spoke of the need to spare no effort when mastering the skills needed in the army. He said that even people most sincerely devoted to the revolutionary cause would be exterminated by the enemy if they were not adequately

armed, equipped and trained.¹ He also emphasized that military science was forever advancing, that weaponry was growing more complex and sophisticated, and that constant effort is required to be able to competently use it and live up to the standards set by modern warfare. Today these ideas are even more to the point.

Soviet officers and men realize this. Their patriotic awareness is revealed in mass socialist emulation conducted in the Army and Navy. Just as in the country at large, it helps promote the servicemen's political and creative activity.

Socialist emulation is a contest among people who are striving towards the same goals, working for the good of Soviet society. It is a competition totally devoid of hostility and ill feeling, implying instead friendly mutual assistance and cooperation. This is true both of civilian and army life. Seeking to further enhance combat readiness, the men work hard to improve their technical skills and advance their political knowledge. Another factor involved is self-improvement, strict observance of the rules of the communist morality and active participation in public work.

It has become a tradition in the Army and Navy to begin the new academic year by setting new targets for the socialist emulation between formations, regiments, ships and units. As a rule, the initiative in this matter belongs to front-rank units. The contestants assume certain commitments determined by the motto of the year, e.g., "To be always on the alert, to be constantly ready to defend the gains of socialism!"

In the course of the competition, servicemen launch patriotic campaigns, such as, "To win the right to be called an excellent company, battery, squadron or department", "To win the title of excellent ship, regiment", "To move to the front ranks among the units", "Hit the target at the first try", "Set the same standards for night and daytime performance". Sections, teams and crews and departments compete for higher proficiency ratings, excellent performance in training and practice, swifter work when preparing weapons for action. All units strive to increase the number

¹ See: V. I. Lenin, "On a Business Basis", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 76.

of front-rankers. This is one of the indicators of the standard of military skills and combat readiness of the troops.

Front-rankers in the Army and Navy are expected to perfectly fulfil their daily duties, have excellent grades in the principal subjects of combat training and political education and not less than good grades in all other subjects, keep their armaments and combat equipment in perfect order, and maintain a high proficiency rating. They also must take an active part in public activities and sports, and have grades or badges awarded for a certain standard of performance in sports and military physical training.

In the rating of sergeants and petty officers as front-rankers the performance of sections, teams, crews and departments under their command is also taken into consideration. They must be well prepared for performing the combat mission, have excellent or good grades in combat training and political education, display good discipline, maintain their weapons in good condition, and perform well when on duty or on watch.

To rate as front-rankers, officers must perform well, personally and competently control and supervise their units so that the latter demonstrate high combat readiness and achieve good and excellent grades in combat training and political education.

The high standard of military skills of Soviet officers and men is a major factor of the Armed Forces' combat potential.

Political Education in the Army

Modern weaponry and good combat training of the Soviet Armed Forces are not the only components of their military might.

Armies of capitalist countries also have the latest armaments, as well as well trained soldiers, sailors and officers. However, what they lack are the lofty and inspiring goals for which Soviet officers and men would not hesitate to give their lives. Socialist armies are aware of the justice of the cause they are serving, and this makes the foundation of their morale.

Lenin laid great emphasis on the socialist army's political

awareness, seeing in it the decisive advantage over capitalist armies. In an article written during the Civil War, he referred to an 18th-century Prussian monarch who stated that if men had known what they were fighting for, not a single war could have been waged. "That old Prussian monarch was no fool," Lenin wrote. "We, however, are prepared to say, comparing our position with that of the monarch, that we can wage war because the masses know what they are fighting for; and they want to fight notwithstanding the incredible burdens ... knowing that they are making these desperate and incredibly heavy sacrifices in defence of their socialist cause..."¹

Even now, imperialist circles take care not to publicize the goals of their aggressive wars, i.e. the political and economic oppression of other peoples for the purpose of enriching capitalist monopolies. They have either to play on the people's patriotic feelings by deluding them or to appeal to their lower instincts by bribing and coercing them.

Imperialists of the USA, Britain, France and Japan justified their intervention in Soviet Russia by the need to protect democracy against Bolshevism. But what democracy was that? The democracy of capitalists and landowners, of course, their "freedom" to exploit millions of Russian workers and peasants. The bogey now used by imperialists of the USA and NATO to justify their war preparations against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries is the "Soviet military threat".

Morale of the Troops—a Major Factor of Their Combat Capacity

A socialist state does not need to conceal or misrepresent the purpose and goals of its army, which safeguards the genuine independence and freedom of the peoples. The entire ideological and political work conducted by the Party in the Soviet Armed Forces is designed to make the servicemen aware of these noble goals, raise their political consciousness, and encourage loyalty to the cause of peace and socialism they serve.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 66.

This painstaking educational work of the Party helps keep up the morale of the Soviet Armed Forces and secures their moral and political superiority over imperialist armies.

Lenin said that a victory in any war is, in the long run, determined by the morale of the masses which shed their blood on the battlefield. "A nation in which the majority of the workers and peasants realise, feel and see that they are fighting for their own Soviet power, for the rule of the working people...—such a nation can never be vanquished."¹

This conclusion, which Lenin formulated in the midst of the Civil War, has been proved by the heroic battles of the Soviet Armed Forces for the freedom and independence of their country.

Today ideological education in the Soviet Armed Forces follows the best revolutionary traditions of the Party and the combat experience of the past war and is conducted in full accord with the requirements of the day and the nature of modern warfare.

Educational work in the army is an integral part of the Party's work in ideological education of all Soviet people. Its chief purpose is to help servicemen evolve a Marxist-Leninist outlook and attain a clear understanding of the phenomena and processes of social development and of their own place in the struggle for social progress. A scientific outlook is formed by an in-depth study of Marxist-Leninist ideas, the policy of the Communist Party and the laws governing social development.

The Party educates Soviet servicemen to adhere to firm ideological convictions, develop political awareness, loyalty to their homeland, a sense of socialist internationalism, comradely feelings towards the peoples and armies of other fraternal socialist states, and irreconcilable attitude towards the enemies of socialism and progress.

One of the major purposes of the Party's ideological and educational work in the army is to instill worthy moral traits in the men. It is based on communist ethical principles which have been concisely formulated in the Party Program. It is especially important that these principles be observed

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting of the Railwaymen of Moscow Junction, April 16, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 319.

in the army, for they are linked with safeguarding the freedom of the Motherland and the gains of socialism. It is indicative that the moral norms of behavior and actions of servicemen have been recorded into the Soviet Military Oath and army manuals and have been given the force of law.

Part of the work aimed at shaping the moral make-up of Soviet officers and men is military training itself, which allows them to develop the moral traits required in combat: awareness of military duty, courage, staunchness and decisiveness in fighting the enemy, strict discipline, readiness to complete the combat mission at whatever the cost. In the long run, one of the principal objectives of ideological and moral education in the Army and Navy is to shape ideologically staunch, and politically and militarily vigilant mature personalities, who must be constantly ready to swiftly rebuff any aggressor.

The moral and psychological training of the army personnel is a major factor determining its readiness to act in modern warfare. The use of weapons of unprecedentedly powerful destructive force and the greatly increased dynamism and intensity of combat demand much higher moral, psychological and physical endurance from the men.

The moral and psychological training of the men continues throughout their entire term of service and forms part of their combat training and political education. Political studies and all ideological work help the men develop ideological and moral strength and the willingness to selflessly perform their duty in defending the Motherland.

Apart from tactical, shooting and technical skills, combat, special and physical training helps the men to withstand stressful situations and develops their willpower, courage and readiness to face danger. With this end in view, military exercises and practice flights and cruises are conducted in an environment designed to duplicate that of real combat, and special training sessions are held to teach the men how to find a way out of difficult and dangerous situations. Here the men have the chance to test and strengthen their willpower and moral endurance.

High psychological and moral qualities are required of servicemen even in peacetime. Maintaining high combat readiness of the troops, permanent combat duty, and learn-

ing to operate sophisticated weapons and combat equipment have increased the pressures of military service, which severely taxes the men's mental, physical and psychological strength. This is also taken into account when training young servicemen. The goal is to help them evolve a conscientious attitude to their duties and studies, a clear understanding of their responsibility towards their country, and strict discipline, for these are the cornerstones of all moral and combat qualities of the Soviet soldier and sailor.

The Soviet Army is called a school for young men. Indeed, military service does offer a political, moral, combat and labor education, which helps the men mature psychologically and physically. The Soviet Armed Forces have a well considered and practice-tested system of education and training which is based on scientifically elaborated programs.

Political Education of the Troops

The military personnel's ideological and political education is carried out, above all, in accordance with a planned program of political classes. The content, forms and methods of this education, as well as its organization and planning, are designed to meet the standards of the various categories of the personnel: officers, ensigns, sergeants and privates.

Army and naval officers receive a systematic Marxist-Leninist education. They study Marxist-Leninist theory, Lenin's works, the history and policy of the Communist Party and its multifaceted activities in guiding the development of the Armed Forces and organizing socialism's defense. A prominent place is assigned to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the war and the army, topical problems of military theory and practice, and educational issues. Many officers, Party and Komsomol activists attend universities of Marxism-Leninism, Party and Komsomol schools, where they advance their theoretical and political education without interrupting their service.

A separate curriculum of political studies has been developed for ensigns and warrant officers. It includes questions of the Party's military policy, the foundations of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the war and the army, and

questions concerning the personnel's political education and military training.

A varied and extensive curriculum of political studies has been worked out for soldiers, sailors, sergeants and petty officers. It covers a wide range of questions, including the history of the Communist Party, the Soviet state and its Armed Forces, the building of socialism in the USSR, topical problems of the CPSU's foreign and domestic policy, and the leading role of the Party in organizing the country's defense. At political education classes, the men study Lenin's ideas about the defense of the socialist Motherland and the character and features of modern warfare, the requirements set by the Military Oath and manuals for the servicemen's discipline, vigilance and combat readiness.

Political education classes are taught by experienced commanders of platoons, companies, batteries, and departments of ships, political workers and staff officers. The more educated ensigns, warrant officers, sergeants and petty officers, Party and Komsomol members, are assigned as assistants to teachers of political education groups. They help men in the individual studies, clarify more complicated issues and find the books they may need.

Soviet cosmonaut Herman Titov can still remember the time when, as a young lieutenant, he taught a political education group:

"In my political studies group there were about twenty soldiers and N.C.O.s. How could I get to know their characters and make our studies lively and interesting? How could I talk to them so that my words about our Soviet life, our Party, our heroic past and future would reach their hearts, rouse their zeal and daring?...

"At the first talk I felt nervous but didn't show it. I had to tell my group about our Party, about its directing and organising function in the life of Soviet society. I had drafted a lecture, but I put it aside and started talking about what I knew of Communists, living people who were performing the great tasks of the present day, about people who had given their lives for the revolution or to defend what it had achieved...

"I was glad to find that the efforts of my best pupils were not wasted. The group twice got an excellent grading when the inspectors came round. But it was not really so

much the grading as the fact that the men became noticeably more mature. Their discipline improved and so did their keenness. This was the main thing."¹

Popularization and Cultural and Educational Work

The daily routine of a military unit sets aside time for popularization and cultural and educational work, which forms a major component of ideological and educational activities in the Army and Navy.

The purpose of popularization work is to explain the Party's current policy, clarify events in domestic and international affairs, the demands made by the orders of the Defense Minister, the content of combat and practice missions and enlist servicemen's efforts to perform them successfully.

In charge of this work are commanders, political workers, and Party and Komsomol activists. The most numerous section of this group are popularization workers in platoons, crews, at battle sections, and shifts on duty.

Popularization work is conducted in a variety of forms, for example, a review of current political events usually held twice a week in the morning hours and lasting up to half an hour. The speaker discusses Party and government decisions, current events and other topical issues. Widely practised are talks, lectures and reports given by specially qualified officers and prepared Communists and Komsomol members from among warrant officers and sergeants. Servicemen's meetings and questions-and-answers sessions are held on a regular basis. Discussions of one or several works by Lenin dealing with certain issues of military development and the defense of the country are quite popular.

An effective medium of propaganda work is the army press. The troops receive quite a few central newspapers, among them the newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star) and magazines. In addition, the Armed Forces put out a large number of their own periodicals. Each military district, fleet and group of armies publish their own daily newspapers. Many formations, units, large combatant ships and military educational establishments issue newspapers in

¹ Herman Titov, *700,000 Kilometres Through Space*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962, pp. 46-51.

large editions, and smaller units have wall newspapers, and satirical and photo sheets.

The USSR Defense Ministry has a military publishing house, Voenizdat, one of the largest in the country. Each year it publishes up to 70 million copies of books, pamphlets, albums, magazines, posters, manuals and textbooks, instructions and regulations, and other publications intended to promote the combat training and political education of the personnel, and the heroic-patriotic education of servicemen and the Soviet people at large.

Cultural and educational work holds a prominent place in moulding the moral make-up of Soviet servicemen. It serves to educate young men serving in the Army and Navy politically, morally and aesthetically and to satisfy their intellectual needs.

The Soviet Army has stressed cultural education of the men ever since its foundation. Lenin and the Party considered this work a prerequisite for the troops' high combat capacity, and made sure that alongside with armaments and ammunition, the army received books, and that no man be overlooked. At Lenin's personal directive, political and cultural work in the army was organized and conducted by such outstanding Party figures as Yakov Sverdlov, Mikhail Kalinin and Anatoli Lunacharsky.

Carrying on the tradition established by Lenin, prominent people in the cultural field, including the writer Maxim Gorky, involved themselves in cultural work in the army. Gorky wrote in 1928:

"The Red Army is not only a fighting force, it is a cultural force. It is a powerful organization which involves huge masses of the Union of Soviets' working population into public and state cultural work... Hardly anywhere is such an attitude to the army possible as in the Union of Soviets, where the young people look at the army as an establishment of cultural education."¹

The Armed Forces give the young people extensive opportunities for cultural development. It is no exaggeration to say that every achievement of modern progressive culture has been put at the disposal of servicemen.

¹ Maxim Gorky, *If the Enemy Does Not Surrender, It Is Destroyed*, Moscow, 1938, p. 15 (in Russian).

Each unit has a well appointed club with a movie projector, a broadcasting center, TV sets, musical instruments, table games and sports equipment. Experienced officers, scientists and specialists deliver lectures, make reports and hold talks there. The men meet delegates of Party congresses, People's Deputies, war and labor veterans, writers and actors. The club has amateur art groups, including theatricals, choirs, music and sports sections; it also provides entertainment for the men on holidays and week-ends. Each month the club gets from eight to ten films, not less than three or four of them new.

An important part of the club is the library. Its catalogues and readers' cards can probably give a better idea than anything else of the men's inner world. The library contains works by Marx, Engels and Lenin, popular political literature, Soviet, Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian and other Soviet peoples' and world classics, modern prose and poetry, and a great variety of military and technical literature.

The political education room (cabin), which is known as Lenin's Room, plays a special role in the servicemen's lives. A substantial part of political and cultural work takes place there. The room has a radio and a TV set, folders containing newspapers and magazines, and musical instruments. Information about Party decisions, the text of the Military Oath, materials illustrating the combat history of the unit and the progress of socialist emulation being held within it, wall newspapers, are displayed there. It also contains a small library.

The cities and towns where military district and fleet headquarters are located, as well as many garrisons, have district, fleet or garrison Officers' Houses which act as centers of political and cultural work among the officer corps and a place where their families can spend their leisure time.

Troops often have museums and rooms of military glory, schools of cultural education, amateur film studios, literary associations and amateur artists' studios. This gives the men wide range for developing their talents and abilities. Very popular among servicemen are district, group and fleet drama theaters, song and dance ensembles and bands. They perform not only on their permanent stages but tour different units and ships, large and small garrisons, often travelling to quite remote places. The number of amateur

theatrical and art groups and people's theaters is constantly growing.

The troops are often visited by actors from professional repertory theaters of Moscow, various republics and regions. Carrying on the good old traditions of wartime, they tour even distant garrisons and units where men are performing their military service.

Socialist Military Discipline

Firm and conscious discipline of troops reflects the state of the army's morale. Lenin defined the principal difference between socialist and bourgeois military discipline, stressing the popular, socialist nature and the deeply conscious character of the former. "The Red Army," he wrote, "established unprecedentedly firm discipline—not by means of the lash, but based on the intelligence, loyalty and devotion of the workers and peasants themselves."¹ It is this type of discipline that renders a socialist army especially strong and assures its victory over the enemies.

"If we give some thought to what, after all, was the underlying reason for this historical miracle," wrote Lenin about the Civil War, "why a weak, exhausted and backward country was able to defeat the most powerful countries in the world, we shall find that it was centralisation, discipline and unparalleled self-sacrifice."²

The admirable staunchness and selflessness of Soviet officers and men in the Great Patriotic War were also the result of firm and conscious discipline. In performing their combat assignments and following the call of the duty, the brave Soviet soldiers endured incredible hardships, fought for each inch of ground without a thought for the danger and attacked fiercely and resolutely. Severely wounded men refused to leave the battlefield, soldiers and commanders alike did not hesitate to give their lives in combat in order to defeat the enemy. That was the supreme reflection of conscious socialist discipline and devotion.

Strengthening of discipline in the Army and Navy has

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speeches on Gramophone Records", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 250.

² V. I. Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 29-April 5, 1920. Report of the Central Committee", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 447.

become more important of late. The standard of the Armed Forces' combat readiness has risen and, to maintain it at the required level, a high degree of organization and strictest order in all matters is needed.

Strict discipline is a sine qua non if combat readiness is to be maintained. But while discipline has always been important, it is even more necessary today and has come to include such concepts as the discipline of combat duty, the discipline of time, the discipline of collective responsibility and the discipline of competently using sophisticated combat equipment. Now that the destructive capacity of weapons has dramatically increased, as have the spatial scope, swiftness and dynamism of combat operations, any departure from military discipline cannot be tolerated. Even a slight deviation from rules and regulations is fraught with grave consequences. Soviet servicemen realize this and do their best never to slacken discipline or allow themselves to act in a slipshod fashion.

A constant effort is taking place in the Army and Navy to consolidate military discipline. Soviet soldiers are being educated in the spirit of conscientious and implicit performance of their duty. A variety of means is used to attain this goal throughout the entire military service.

Of special importance is organizing the servicemen's daily activities and life in accordance with service regulations, and making sure that each unit follows the rules prescribed therein. Service regulations are rightly known as the military service code of laws. They reflect all aspects of the activities of the Armed Forces both in peace- and wartime.

Commanding officers and political workers have made it one of the goals of their organizational and educational work to ensure that all servicemen have a perfect knowledge of the demands recorded in the service regulations and other documents which regulate life and activities of the troops, and that they strictly observe these demands.

The Soviet Armed Forces have general service regulations and field manuals. The former include the Interior Service Regulations, Disciplinary Regulations, Garrison and Guard Duty Regulations, and Drill Regulations.

The Interior Service Regulations define the order and rules of daily life and activity of the troops. Their first

article states: "The serviceman of the Armed Forces of the USSR is a defender of his Motherland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The serviceman is held personally responsible for safeguarding of his Motherland."

The Regulations go on to say that the serviceman must carry the high name of the citizen of the USSR with dignity, value the honor and military glory of the Armed Forces of the USSR and of his unit and his military rank, and promote friendship and combat cooperation with the armed forces of the other brotherly socialist countries. He must perform his military duty to his Soviet Motherland to the end. The Regulations' rules also reflect other moral norms of Soviet society. Soviet servicemen shall be always an example of a culturally and morally advanced individual, be modest and self-controlled, strictly observe the norms of communist ethics, protect the honor and dignity of the citizens, and help maintain public order.

The Regulations define the servicemen's duties, their relationships, their professional functions, and the order of interior service in a unit.

Disciplinary Regulations outline the essence and significance of military discipline and the measures aimed at maintaining it. Military discipline in the Soviet Armed Forces, the Regulations read, is based on a high level of the servicemen's political awareness, understanding of their patriotic duty and the internationalist goals of the Soviet people, utter devotion to their Soviet Motherland, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government.

The Regulations define the duties of the servicemen involved in maintaining discipline, which can be reduced to this main point: strictly and unswervingly to observe the requirements of the laws and regulations, obey the orders and instructions of commanding officers, and meet the demands of military service. The Regulations provide for incentives to servicemen for excellent performance of their duty. Soviet commanders make sensible use of their disciplinary rights and never fail to encourage those who deserve it. Outstanding feats, noble deeds, success in combat training and political education and in performing combat assignments receive due rewards. Those who have performed particularly well are granted state awards.

At the same time, the Regulations provide for quite

severe punishment for carelessness or wrong-doing. The interests of the Motherland, state the Regulations, oblige the commanding officers to resolutely and firmly demand that military discipline and order are maintained and to leave no misdemeanor unnoticed. The Regulations oblige each serviceman actively and resolutely to support the demands of commanding officers and assist them in every way possible in upholding firm discipline and order.

Along with the service regulations, the Soviet Armed Forces have field manuals which regulate the combat activities of the troops. These incorporate the previous combat experience and achievements of modern military art. The manuals teach the servicemen how to act and win in modern combat.

These are the main factors securing the development and strengthening of the Soviet Armed Forces and the growth of their combat capability. The Communist Party and the Soviet Government constantly take care to develop and consolidate all components of the Soviet Army's and Navy's combat readiness, to ensure the reliable defense of socialist gains.

Combat Fraternity

Several decades ago the Soviet Union ceased to be the only socialist country: a socialist community has now been formed. Since the world-historic victory of the October Revolution, this has been the greatest achievement of social progress.

Just as the Soviet system was a prototype of new statehood in the socialist countries, so the Soviet Army became a model for the military organization of socialist countries. Proletarian internationalism, as the principle upon which a union of working people is being built, has acquired new meaning. A fraternity of the free peoples of the socialist countries has been evolved and, together with it, a sense of collective responsibility for their development, consolidation, independence and security. The Soviet people consider it its internationalist duty to secure, together with the other socialist countries, a reliable defense of the entire socialist community. This is both the patriotic and the internationalist duty of Soviet officers and men.

Community of Ideas and Goals

The relations among the peoples and armies of the socialist countries have been shaped along historically new lines. They are based on friendship, equality, mutual assistance and extensive cooperation for the sake of attaining the same goal: the building of a society founded on social justice. The cornerstone of the socialist community is the close union of the Communist parties of the fraternal countries, their ideological and political unity.

Good progress is being made in the economic cooperation of the socialist countries. The decisive role here belongs to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, CMEA, which organizes and improves the international socialist division of labor, helps make more efficient use of the advantages of socialism and of scientific and technological achievements.

On the international scene, a factor of major importance is the coordinated foreign policy of the fraternal parties and governments of socialist countries. Their cohesion, joint international actions and the growth of their economic and defense potential are a decisive factor in deterring aggressors and preserving peace.

As could be expected, the imperialist circles met the emergence and establishment of the socialist community with extreme hostility. They realized that the victory of socialism in other countries and their growing proximity and unity would eventually cripple imperialism. The socialist community offers an attractive example to the peoples waging national liberation struggles and serves as the chief obstacle in the way of the aggressive and hegemonist plans of imperialist circles. It is therefore only natural that they should spare no effort to weaken the socialist countries, sow dissent among them and attempt to destroy them one by one.

A most dangerous manifestation of the anti-socialist policy of the reactionary forces of international imperialism was the establishment, in 1949, of the aggressive North Atlantic Alliance, the subsequent large-scale steps to build up its military potential and to involve new countries, including West Germany, in it.

Soviet proposals to set up a European system of collective security which would have prevented the split of Europe into two opposing groups of countries were declined

by the Western states.

The formation of aggressive imperialist blocs and the threat of another war hanging over Europe prompted the European socialist countries to establish their own reliable system of collective defense and security.

In May 1955, the governments of Albania,¹ Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the USSR signed a collective allied Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which has gone down in history as the Warsaw Treaty. It rests on the community of the economic and socio-political systems, the ideology, morality and vital interests and goals of the socialist states.

The main objective and historical purpose of the Warsaw Treaty Organization is to safeguard and strengthen peace and security of peoples, and provide the best opportunities for broadest cooperation between the countries. Thus, the Treaty is open to other states irrespective of their social and state system.

The supreme political body of the Warsaw Treaty Organization is the Political Consultative Committee composed of leaders of the Communist parties and governments of the member states. At its meetings, the Committee discusses and works out decisions on the vital issues that affect the interests of the member states, on the most important questions of strengthening the defense capacity of the allied countries and socialist community's collective defense. One of the major political activities of the Warsaw Treaty member states has always been campaigning for peace, detente and disarmament.

In recent years the Political Consultative Committee has advanced major initiatives of historic importance aimed at curbing the arms race, preventing another world war and setting up a reliable system of European and international security. In 1983 and 1984, it addressed NATO members with a proposal that a treaty be signed on the mutual non-use of military force and maintaining relations of peace. More than once it has proposed simultaneously disbanding the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO. However, when the time came to act the Western states declined these as well as many other proposals. In 1987, the Warsaw Treaty countries came out with a proposal for cutting the armed

¹ Albania had taken no part in the work of the Warsaw Treaty Organization since 1962 and left it in 1968.

forces and armaments of all European states to the level of reasonable sufficiency.

The Warsaw Treaty is a reliable instrument for building up the socialist countries' defense capability and a formidable obstacle in the path of aggressive imperialist designs. Its members, which interact and cooperate with other states and all peaceful forces, confidently and actively tackle the vital tasks to prevent a war in Europe, promote peace, relax international tensions and develop equal and peaceful cooperation among states.

A Reliable Shield Protecting Socialism and Peace

The Warsaw Treaty states have their own military organization, the Joint Armed Forces, which are made up of a definite contingent of units and formations representing all arms of the service and the Navy of fraternal armies. In peacetime, these contingents continue service within national armies.

Experience has shown that the Warsaw Treaty Organization is making an important contribution to maintaining peace not only in Europe but other regions of the world as well. It is a reliable shield protecting socialism, and the repeated attempts of imperialist circles to shake and weaken the socialist community and destroy its individual links have always been strongly repelled.

In Hungary in 1956, reactionary forces which relied on the support of imperialist powers, made an attempt to overthrow the popular power. Aided by the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces, the working people of Hungary crushed the counterrevolutionaries and upheld their country's revolutionary achievements. Other socialist countries also rendered Hungary great moral and material support.

In 1962, socialist community countries led by the Soviet Union by their active measures forced the American imperialists to abandon their plans to attack socialist Cuba.

The Warsaw Treaty members—the USSR, Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR and Poland—rendered effective aid to Czechoslovakia, when in 1968 imperialist circles and their accomplices threatened its socialist gains. The attempt to tear Czechoslovakia out of the world socialist system was frustrated.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries did

not hesitate to support the Vietnamese people in their arduous fight against US aggression. The heroic struggle of the people of Vietnam and the extensive aid of the fraternal socialist countries combined to vanquish the largest-scale aggressive action undertaken by US imperialism since the Second World War.

The Warsaw Treaty member-states extended resolute moral support and effective assistance to Poland in its struggle against the subversive activities of imperialist forces and domestic counterrevolutionary elements.

The Communist and Workers' parties, governments and peoples of the Warsaw Treaty member-states continue their joint efforts towards strengthening peace, halting the arms race, and deterring aggressive imperialist forces. They resolutely support the peace initiatives of the Soviet Union aimed at preventing the militarization of outer space, limiting and eliminating nuclear weapons, and other such actions.

At present, when militarism and reaction are mounting military strength, the fraternal socialist countries take steps towards strengthening their defensive alliance and their collective readiness to rebuff the aggressor. They are working to improve the organization and training of their armed forces and to update their weapons and equipment. A major contribution to this effort is being made by the Soviet Union, the country with the largest economic potential and the most advanced defense industry. Under the mutual assistance program, it has supplied other socialist countries with the latest combat equipment and weapons. At the same time, the Soviet Union has rendered them substantial assistance in establishing their own defense industries.

The socialist countries also closely cooperate in the training of military cadres. They train officers at higher and secondary military educational establishments. Many of the commanding officers and political workers and hundreds of generals and top commanding officers of the socialist countries' armies have been educated in the USSR.

The Warsaw Treaty armies generally compare notes in the field of military development and combat training and political education of personnel. United by the common goal—the collective defense of socialism—they pool their efforts when mastering new means and methods of

waging modern war and the forms and methods of Party-political work.

Joint military exercises and maneuvers, which are planned by the Joint Command and conducted in a variety of forms, are an important way to help strengthen the fighting efficiency and the combat cooperation of the Warsaw Treaty fraternal armies. They include command and headquarters and special war games, and army and naval exercises of varying scope, purpose and designation. In recent years, the Warsaw Treaty armies have held major joint exercises codenamed "Combat Fraternity", "Shield", "Friendship", "The Union" and others. They have offered the personnel a good chance to practise cooperation in modern warfare and to learn to coordinate their actions under a variety of conditions resembling those of real combat.

Exercises help to improve the troops' operational and tactical training and their field, aviation and naval skills, work through the means of control and cooperation between staffs and troops, the forms of troop organization, and the methods of using modern weapons and combat equipment in battle.

Joint exercises promote the friendship and combat fraternity of the Warsaw Treaty armies' personnel. Working together to accomplish common tasks, they come to know each other better, learn to respect and trust each other, compare notes and develop the traditions of combat cooperation. The exercises never fail to produce instances of comradely mutual assistance and fraternal solidarity among the men. Another factor helping consolidate the combat cooperation is the manyfaceted Party-political work jointly undertaken during the exercises by the political bodies of the armies of the Warsaw Treaty countries.

The steps taken by the Warsaw Treaty states to strengthen their collective defenses are not intended to impair the security of other peoples and countries. On the contrary, their purpose is to stabilize the international situation and maintain and strengthen peace. The Warsaw Treaty Organization has repeatedly declared that it does not seek to attain military superiority over NATO; it has proposed to stop the arms race and reduce, and later completely eliminate all armaments.

Defending the People's Freedom

The October Revolution prompted liberation struggle of oppressed peoples against imperialism and colonialism throughout the world. Ever since it was formed, the Soviet state has done its best to support them in their struggle for freedom and national independence. Lenin wrote in 1920: "It is unquestionable that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should give help to the working masses of the backward countries, and that the backward countries can emerge from their present stage of development when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support."¹

The Soviet Union has always done its best to render aid to the peoples fighting for their national and social emancipation. In the difficult years of the Civil War and foreign intervention, the Soviet Republic came to the aid of the working class of Finland and Hungary, which were fighting to defend their revolutionary gains from international and domestic reaction. The Soviet people extended all manner of assistance to the people of Mongolia and to other European and Asian peoples in their liberation struggle against foreign oppressors.

The Soviet Union's victory over German fascism and Japanese militarism in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 gave new and powerful impetus to the peoples' liberation movement, which eventually caused the colonial system of imperialism to collapse. Dozens of newly independent states emerged on its ruins.

The traditions of proletarian internationalism and of supporting the peoples' liberation struggle characteristic for the Soviet country are being further developed. In 1960, on the initiative of the USSR, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was duly done. Since that time, over 70 countries have declared their independence. At present, three-quarters of all UN members are newly free

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International, July 19-August 7, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 243-244.

states, some of which have chosen a non-capitalist way of development, a socialist-oriented way.

Imperialist states do not hesitate to resort to any means—economic, political and military—in seeking to regain their power over the now free peoples. Since the Second World War they have provoked over 200 armed conflicts aimed at depriving peoples of their freedom and independence. The chief suppressor of national liberation movements is the USA, which has taken on the role of world policeman.

Freedom-loving peoples resolutely condemn and oppose the aggressive schemes of the USA and its allies. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have come out firmly and resolutely in defense of the newly free peoples.

The USSR renders the newly independent states economic, technological, scientific and cultural assistance. It has signed agreements on economic and technological cooperation with 70 Asian, African and Latin American states, helping to build 1,700 industrial enterprises and other economic installations and building hundreds more.

The Soviet Union considers it its internationalist duty to help the newly free states strengthen their defense capacity. It has given a number of states substantial assistance in setting up their national armed forces, supplying them with modern weaponry and training military cadres.

The peoples of Syria and Egypt remember the aid extended by the Soviet Union in their struggle against Israeli aggression in 1967 and 1973. The peoples of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique have emerged victorious in the national liberation struggle against imperialism largely due to all-round Soviet assistance, including military aid. Julius Nyerere, one of the leaders of the liberation movement in Africa, stated that the MPLA, armed only with bows and arrows, could not have stood up to the Portuguese colonizers. At that time the West siding with the Portuguese colonizers refused to supply it with armaments. But the Soviet Union and its allies gave them to the MPLA. Angola is now an independent country. Later, the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist countries extended assistance to Angola and Ethiopia in their struggle against aggression launched by imperialism's henchmen.

In 1982, the Soviet Union and other socialist community

countries resolutely voiced their support for the Lebanon, Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization and their opposition to the barbarous aggression of Israel aided and abetted by US ruling circles. Syrian troops, armed in part with Soviet weaponry, fought in cooperation with the PLO to successfully combat Israeli aggression.

Western propaganda had long spread the myth about the overwhelming superiority of the Israeli army, which is equipped mostly with US-made weaponry. The Syrian Armed Forces Command refuted these allegations. Under the blows of the Syrian troops the Israeli army suffered heavy losses. Even with the latest American armaments, reported a Syrian statement, Israel failed to attain the ultimate goals of its intervention. Its M-48 and M-60 tanks were powerless to score any successes in combat with modern Syrian T-72 tanks. In tank battles in the Be'aa Valley and in the Beirut, Bhamdoun sector, the aggressors lost over 400 tanks and armored vehicles. The statement went on to say that a single look at the enemy tanks hit by anti-tank guns and missiles was sufficient to show the efficiency of Syrian weapons.

In cooperation with air defense forces, Syrian pilots engaged in a number of fierce air battles. The Israelis launched massive air raids, using sophisticated electronic equipment made in the USA. However, the Syrian air defense forces shot down a large number of enemy aircraft, including the latest US F-15 fighters and F-16 fighter-bombers.

Coming to the aid of Afghanistan represented an action of internationalist solidarity on the part of the Soviet Union. The Soviet and Afghan peoples have long been united by a bond of friendship. The young Soviet Republic was the first state to recognize the independence of Afghanistan, which was proclaimed in February 1919. Lenin, head of the Soviet Government, and M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the All-Union Central Executive Committee, wrote in their message to the people of Afghanistan: "Let the wish of the Afghan people to follow the Russian example be the best guarantee of the stability and independence of the Afghan state... The establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between the two great peoples will open a broad opportunity for mutual assistance against any encroachment on the

part of foreign predators upon other peoples' freedom and property."¹

In April 1978, the working people of Afghanistan headed by the National Democratic Party were successful in their democratic revolution, which provoked an extremely hostile response from imperialist circles and their reactionary agents. In the border regions of Iran and Pakistan, bands of mercenaries financed by the USA and some other NATO countries and lavishly supplied with the latest weaponry and means of staging subversive actions, were knocked together for the purpose of strangling the revolution. Penetrating into Afghanistan's territory, the bands terrorize the civilian population, plunder and kill, being especially brutal when it comes to representatives of the popular regime and its supporters.

To save the revolution, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan appealed to the Soviet Union for help. True to its internationalist duty the Soviet Union could not abandon the friendly Afghan people in time of trouble and in response to repeated appeals from the Afghanistan government, a limited contingent of Soviet troops was brought in that country to help it repulse outside aggression. Soviet officers and men have proved staunch and selfless in helping Afghanistan defend its revolutionary gains.

The sons and grandsons of those who defended the freedom and independence of the Soviet state and liberated peoples of Europe and Asia from the fascist yoke are now living up to their internationalist commitments with courage, dignity and honor wherever they happen to be—at home or abroad. Brought up by the Communist Party in the spirit of devotion to their Motherland, dedicated to the ideas of social justice, internationalism and humanism, they are vigilantly safeguarding peace and the security of their socialist country.

Side by side with the armies of other socialist countries, the Soviet Armed Forces are a reliable safeguard of peace and the constructive labor of their people who build a new life. They stand always on guard, always on alert.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Message to the King of Afghanistan Amanullah Khan", *Complete Works*, Vol. 50, Politizdat, Moscow, 1965, p. 386 (in Russian).

CONCLUSION

Born out of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Soviet Armed Forces have a truly heroic past. More than once they have had to fight selflessly against the forces of world imperialism, and each time they have proved their worth with honor and defended their socialist Motherland.

In the years of the Civil War, at the time between the two world wars, and in the fierce battles of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet army has defeated the aggressors who have sought to undermine the freedom and independence of the Soviet Union. History has shown that a socialist army fighting for a just cause, for the power of workers and peasants, and the freedom of peoples is able to vanquish any aggressors.

In the 70 years of the history of the Soviet power, the Communist Party and the socialist state have accumulated a great deal of experience in the military field and the armed defense of the country.

What are the lessons the past has taught us?

Life has proven Lenin's concept that "no revolution is worth anything unless it can defend itself".¹ Lenin and the Communists founded the Soviet state and provided it with a reliable shield against counterrevolution and aggression.

History has also shown that to effectively defend the country and be able to stand up to the powerful armed force of imperialism, a strong, well trained and well equipped and disciplined army is required. Such an army was formed by Lenin, by the Party, and it is fulfilling its historic mission with honor.

A revolutionary military organization, as the experience

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Report at a Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions, October 22, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 123.

has shown, must be organized as a new type of army, an army built on the basis of socialist ideology and revolutionary military science. Such an army is recruited from among the working classes and strata of society and defends their vital interests. The commanding officers are recruited from among the best representatives of the working class and working masses and should be ideologically stable and dedicated to the cause of the revolution, the Party and the people. It must be a regular army with a high standard of organization, built on the principles of undivided leadership and influence of the Party, in the spirit of socialist construction and indissoluble link with the people, on the principles of strict centralism and one-man leadership, with the political bodies and Party organizations playing an active organizing role.

An advanced social system, the moral and political cohesion of the people, the unity of the people and the army, the just goals of the struggle, socialist patriotism and internationalism, and Party guidance of the Armed Forces—these are the life-giving sources of their military might, ensuring victory over the enemy.

An army's combat capacity and its equipment are determined by the level of economic development. The Communist Party and the Soviet state have always taken care of constantly improving the defense industry and developing and producing new modern combat equipment and weapons. In this, the Party proceeds from Lenin's idea that "any army which does not train to use all the weapons, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses, or may possess, is behaving in an unwise or even criminal manner".¹ Soviet military science closely follows the developments in the military field in order to improve the means and methods of armed struggle. The Soviet Armed Forces receive everything necessary to rebuff and destroy an aggressor armed with any latest weaponry. All armed services of the Armed Forces and arms are being developed on a planned and balanced basis with full consideration of the features and demands of modern warfare.

The backbone of the Army and Navy is formed by com-

manding officers and political workers. The Party and the Government has always emphasized the training of the officer corps. Everything is done so that they receive an all-round education and training. Military educational establishments and active service promote their daily ideological, political, combat and technical training; and every opportunity is afforded them to raise the level of their military and educational skills and knowledge.

Combat training of the troops has always been of major importance in ensuring general combat and competent performance during war. Modern weaponry and the nature of modern warfare continually demand better training, psychological and physical preparedness and cooperation in combat. The levels of the men's skills and knowledge needed today have risen as well as their moral, psychological and physical training. And this necessarily affects the overall system of organization and training of the Armed Forces' personnel.

History offers striking proof that a socialist army possesses a weapon which can never belong to an imperialist army—the high morale of the troops. Firm ideological principles, political awareness, unflinching devotion to their Soviet Motherland, patriotism and internationalism, and the knowledge that they are fighting for a just cause—these are the things that decided the Soviet Armed Forces' superiority and ultimate victory over strong and cruel enemies, and have made them what they are today—a reliable safeguard of their homeland.

Meticulous work is being done by the Party to help the Soviet servicemen reach political, ideological and moral maturity. This work is conducted by commanding officers, political workers, and Party and Komsomol organizations of the Army and Navy. It was the persistent and vigorous Party-political work that encouraged the men to display resolution and staunchness in fighting the enemy during the war. Today, too, this work is an efficient and well tested means to enhance combat capacity and combat readiness of the Armed Forces.

Experience has shown that an army cannot be strong without strict conscious discipline, order and organization. Thanks to the iron conscious discipline that has always been a feature of the Soviet Army, making millions of men raise as one in the defense of the country, it has been able to

¹ V. I. Lenin, " 'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 96.

score brilliant victories over its enemies. The unprecedented staunchness and selflessness of Soviet officers and men, their courage, resolution and readiness to perform acts of heroism have been the highest manifestation of this discipline during the war.

The importance of military discipline today has greatly increased. The introduction and constant improvement of new combat equipment and weapons as well as their growing complexity, and the unprecedented intensity of modern combat have raised the demands made of each man and each army unit. The men now have more personal responsibility for accurately and implicitly carrying out combat orders, and must be prepared to sacrifice themselves to fulfil their combat mission and win victory in battle. These high moral and combat qualities can be fostered only in the course of combat training and political education, daily activities, by the setting of high standards and strict observance of the rules prescribed by regulations and manuals.

Experience has confirmed the absolute truth that the socialist states, all peaceful nations must constantly display their vigilance to the intrigues of the aggressive and imperialist forces, strengthen their combat readiness to rebuff the aggressors.

In case of enemy attack, the inexorable law comes into force: everything for the front, everything for the victory. The country turns into a single military camp, and political and military leadership act in unity. Mobilization of all the forces of the people and the army to rout the aggressor is ensured by the Party's collective will, authority and its inspiring example, by the tense political and organizational activities of its combatant headquarters—the Central Committee. The heroic path traversed by the Soviet Armed Forces and their glorious victories have highlighted the fact that the Communist Party always led the fighting masses, Communists were in the front ranks at both the fighting and the home fronts, and this allowed the Soviet people to overcome all difficulties and emerge victorious every time.

History has fully confirmed the viability and urgency of Lenin's idea on the need for the forces of socialism to unite and rally, to pool their military efforts to oppose the united front of the aggressive forces of world imperialism. At present, the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces are standing

guard to protect the achievements of socialism side by side with the other fraternal socialist countries and their armies. The unity of the socialist community countries and the combat fraternity of their armed forces are a reliable guarantee of the security of each of these states and the community as a whole.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries never relax their efforts aimed at preserving and strengthening peace. Another series of steps in this direction were large-scale Soviet peace initiatives designed to stop the arms race, prevent the militarization of outer space, substantially reduce and then completely eliminate nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and attain general disarmament.

The Soviet people, guided by the Communist Party, are working vigorously to implement the plans defined in the CPSU Program and the decisions of the 27th Party Congress, which are aimed at promoting the social and economic progress of Soviet society and raising the material and cultural standard of the people's lives. To put these plans into practice, the Soviet people need lasting peace. War is alien to the very nature of socialist system, to its ideology and politics, which are based on Lenin's ideas on the building of a new society, economic competition and peaceful cooperation with all nations. The Soviet Union will never stop its efforts to preserve and strengthen peace and will work to provide favorable external conditions for the advancement of socialist society and the building of communism.

The Soviet Armed Forces, a reliable shield protecting the security of their socialist Motherland, a true safeguard of Soviet people's constructive labor and bulwark of world peace, serve these noble goals.

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